THE COMMONWEAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Seeking the Center 225
Week by Week 227
Tom-toms in the Capitol 229
Crime and the Press ..... Ernest A. Dewey 231
The Religion of Death ..... Michael Williams 234
Shepherds (*verse*) ..... May T. Burnett 236
As Congress Meets ..... Oliver McKee, jr. 237
Noël (*verse*) ..... Margaret Tucker 238
Connoisseurs on the Spot ..... Terence O'Donnell 239
Tollon Berries (*verse*) ..... Hugh Ennis 241
Mechanics and Philosophers ..... Vincent Engels 241
Communications 242
The Play ..... Richard Dana Skinner 245
Books ..... T. C., Speer Strahan, Brother Leo, J. Elliot Ross 246

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SEEKING THE CENTER

SPEAKING at a mass meeting of Jews, Protestants and Catholics held recently in White Plains, New York, the purpose of which was to promote the cause of world disarmament, Mr. Fred B. Smith, the chairman of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, made a profoundly significant statement. A veteran of veterans among those evangelical Protestant Christians who are seeking to overcome the bad effects of sectarianism, while striving to retain what they hold to be the benefits of private judgment in religious thinking, probably there is no man whose experience and whose character better qualifies him correctly to estimate the nature of the social forces now so actively if confusedly contending for expression. Five times has Mr. Smith traveled round the world, and more than seventy times has he crossed the Atlantic between the New World and the Old in errands connected with his mission of religious coöperation. In words surcharged with conviction, he spoke to the audience gathered in the beautiful and well-proportioned County Center hall of White Plains, of the growing sense of "expectancy" which was gathering everywhere among religious people—a sort of mental and spiritual atmosphere of crisis, like the still yet thrilling moment before a storm, or perhaps like the hour of concentrated quiet, in which there is the awareness of some mighty event at hand, such as comes just before the dawn to those who have risen early or who have watched through the night.

When the Catholic speaker said that while it was very difficult to diagnose, and still more difficult to prescribe remedies for, all the particular problems that human society was struggling to solve, it was certain that one of the major causes of all social problems was the disastrous separation of public from private principles of morality, the veteran Protestant leader uttered a fervent "Amen!" Later on, he declared that what the Catholic had said "was as true as anything in the Bible"—and no Protestant could have put his agreement with a Catholic in more clinching terms. What the Catholic had in mind (and as that speaker happened to be the present writer, what he had in mind can be correctly summarized) was the mournful fact that thousands of men and women who in their dealings with their neighbors, in all private and personal matters, are people of complete honor, and truthfulness, and kindliness, will as members or leaders

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of political parties, or in business dealings on a large scale, or as politicians, statesmen, or government authorities, commit or permit all sorts of unethical, sometimes downright immoral, behavior. They will shut their eyes to unfairness or injustice in economic matters, putting dividends and profits above human rights. They will promote their political parties through devious channels, tolerating tricks and deceptions and lies which as individuals they scorn. In the spirit of that most immoral of maxims, "My country, right or wrong," they will exalt narrow nationalism above human and neighborly patriotism and the common weal of humanity. Practical Protestants know that this is so; thoughtful Jews are aware of the facts; so are Catholics; so are men and women who are outside of formal alliance with organized religious groups but who still hold to a belief in God, and, therefore, to belief in a center of unchanging moral and ethical principles. And that sense of expectancy to which Mr. Smith testified is nothing other than the widespread general movement of desire for some center of agreement which would bind people together in coöperative action against the dissolving and destructive effects of the materialistic or merely pragmatic systems and philosophies which are threatening civilization with collapse.

In the December number of *Scribner's Magazine* one of the most acute analysists and most thoughtful commentators on American society, Dr. Charles A. Beard, gives a remarkable confirmation of the statement of Mr. Fred B. Smith. Dr. Beard is far from being an evangelical Protestant. Author, with his wife, of that illuminating book, "The Rise of American Civilization," he is no merely journalistic maker of five-year plans and mass-production panaceas. History is his chief study, and "science" is his guiding spirit—a rather nebulous sort of guiding spirit; but let that point pass for the present. The particular thing of interest in Dr. Beard's article is the way in which it testifies to that same sense of expectancy, of a desire to return to some firm center of thought, as was expressed by the Christian evangelist. Summing up a compact and lucid study of world confusion, Dr. Beard sees, as the religious leaders do, that "the world is in confusion and doubt—and politics, economics, engineering rationality, and mechanical dictatorships offer no satisfactory clew out of the Daedalian tangle. Politics alone is helpless, because as an art it relies on opinion; and as a science it is descriptive or, if pragmatic, acts only within a narrow range of certainty. Economics separated from politics is only half a subject to start with and is in such a state of chaos that it no longer boasts of being a science. Manchesterism is dead beyond resurrection; a timid reformism holds the center of the scene with Communism attacking it on all fronts. Natural science is powerless in the human domain because it is of necessity neutral; it cannot say whether chemistry should be used for killing or healing. Its victories have come from its very neutrality and when it departs from neutrality it ceases to be science and becomes ethics, prejudice, or superstitition. That is why millions spent for research in sociology, unguided by a dominant ethical purpose, will never bring us to the center of things. When knowledge and purpose are what we need, government by consulting uninformed opinion is only a little better than consulting the stars or the entrails of birds.

"If so, what is the root of our trouble? It lies in our philisophy of life, or rather the absence of it, if that is not a paradox." After the apparition of Descartes, thinks Dr. Beard, philosophers divided into two camps: impractical idealists, "who soared off into transcendental heights, and materialists, who sank down at last with Darwinism into primeval slime, both cocksure and equally wrong." We lack the space to follow Dr. Beard step by step in his further analysis, and we must wait for his next article, to be entitled "A Search for the Center," in which, according to the magazine's announcement, he will "discuss the way a new belief might be established." The main point at present is the fact that it is toward Belief that this scientific historian turns; he seems to have in his mind what so many others have, namely, the desire for a religion: a religion which will give purpose and direction to science, to economics, to politics, to government, to art and letters. "Moral obligation has disappeared from the center of our thinking"; moral obligation must be restored.

As for what religion there is in the world today, Dr. Beard dismisses it rather brusquely—although he appears to be willing that the new religion "will extract the substance of the great teachings of religion—of Buddha and Jesus for example." But Dr. Beard, like many other historians and scientists, seems to be strangely ignorant of what living religions are actually teaching. For example, he dismisses the pregnant and practical—the truly radical, or root-principled—teaching of the Head of the Catholic Church, as follows: "The Pope, to be sure, tells the faithful to be good and to avoid contacts with wicked Socialists, but the faithful go on trafficking, profit-making and speculating with the best (or worst) of the pagans." There is too much truth in the second part of Dr. Beard's sentence, unfortunately, but how naively inadequate is his description of the Pope's social doctrine! Why do not scientific historians justify the main principle of science, the ascertainment of facts, before they trust themselves to offer cocksure opinions on the Church—especially at a time like the present, when the Church freely proffers what she has to share with all men of good-will who are sincerely anxious of finding that ethical center desiderated by Dr. Beard?

Well, perhaps they will begin to do so if Catholics themselves will do the part which is strictly incumbent upon them if they are to be practical as well as merely nominal Catholics, namely, live up to the teachings of their Church, and make those teachings—and that practice of the teachings—known to the world in which

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they live. For, quite apart from the question of accepting the full religious doctrine of the Church is the question of the coöperation of the Church in rebuilding our shattered society. A common effort to find and use a center of ethical purpose based upon the natural laws of morality is quite possible, and should be made.

WEEK BY WEEK

THAT Mr. Hoover's sombrero should have been flung into the magic circle at a moment when the delicate matter of congressional alignment was being decided might in itself be a matter of regret. But what shall one say of the manner in which Senator Simeon D. Fess accomplished the tossing? It would be interesting to display the bad grammar, faulty vocabulary, unsound economics and notorious partizanship of this document. What interests us at the present moment, however, is its politics. Regrettable in the eyes of Mr. Fess is the circumstance that "in the exigencies of party politics, political leaders are inclined to employ the depression as a basis for utilizing the unthinking disaffected who have been taught to look to the government for relief." He proposes, therefore, to form "an intelligent public opinion capable of proving to them that groan and travail that the President is not responsible for the spots on the sun." He is to be seen rather (according to a beautiful figure of speech) as the pilot on the bridge "with a poised brain and a steady hand," while the crew is bewildered and the passengers are "confined to their staterooms." All this at a moment when, if anything is to be accomplished, national unity to the utmost possible extent is desirable. Surely even a campaign committee may be expected to use better judgment than this. What every intelligent American is doing is certainly not accusing the President of having wrecked the machinery of the price level, or of having forced down the quotation for wheat. What he is thinking runs pretty much as follows: During the past four years Mr. Hoover has acted the part of the pilot rather than that of the captain; the crew—Republican party—has been demoralized beyond his control; and the passengers, the most orderly lot on record, have simply watched and waited in the staterooms while the mate, the chief steward and the engineers were running amuck, partly because they had no competent orders and partly because they were throwing spitballs at the "pilot."

Three Cheers!

THE latest voice to be raised in behalf of an organized medical service to supplant our present haphazard and wasteful system, is that of C.-E. A. Winslow, professor of Public Health in the Yale Medical School, and a member of the Board of Scientific Directors of the Rockefeller Institute. Writing in the *Yale Review,* Dr. Winslow summarizes the unsatisfactory situation with which we are all more or less familiar but on which reminder and challenge are useful if we are ever to effect an intelligent solution. The most authoritative statistical studies of recent years "have made it increasingly clear that, if the aim of medicine is to provide all the people with the care they need, that aim is not being reached." Specifically, he notes "a grave and an increasing deficiency of medical service in rural areas"; a large percentage, even in cities, of "illnesses so serious as to incapacitate for work," which receive no treatment; "a woful lack of support for our community health programs, and equally serious failure on the part of the public to demand preventive service from the individual practitioner of medicine." To these he adds the unideal feature of "the resort to charity on the part of many who could meet an average but not an extreme case of illness"; and the "appalling waste of money in the use of drugs and nostrums and in various forms of quackery." So much for the average public. The average doctor suffers, in his way, just as keenly. After his expensive professional education, such is the mounting cost of modern medicine, what with office upkeep, expensive equipment, "the burden of uncollected bills and free medical service," that he can look forward, even in large cities, to earning "a net income of less than $3,500 a year."

Health Insurance Again

WHENEVER these facts are reviewed (and their purport is such that they are reviewed more and more often) some form of general health insurance is invariably suggested to equalize the economic burden and to stabilize the profession. Dr. Winslow is no exception. He advocates a twofold development: "a more complete organization of the professional agencies and individuals concerned, for the rendering of more economical, more efficient and more adequate service"; and "the organization of large and unselected groups of the public for the payment for medical service on an insurance basis." While thus in no sense *sui generis,* his plan is accompanied by certain intelligent assumptions in regard to his fellow citizens which give it an extra persuasive value. He notes the forms of health insurance which have been successful abroad, particularly in the Netherlands and in Denmark, ending with a caution against supposing they can be imported: "Each nation has its own psychology and its own type of government and its own social system. What we need is an American plan. To be more accurate, we need a series of American plans; for North and South, East and West, city and country, have their own special problems which must be met in different ways." Under this flexible formula, the insurance-paying unit may be formed "on industrial lines, on social or fraternal lines, . . . on the lines of a school district or other governmental area." Some city or state subsidy, according to Dr. Winslow, would be necessary. He will probably meet a good deal of disagreement over this feature. On the other hand, he envisions more concretely than any of his colleagues

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how the medical unit in his system would be kept up to efficiency: "It should be governed as to all professional matters by the professional personnel. . . . It should provide for the fullest possible maintenance of the personal relationship between physician and patient. . . . It must be based on the general supervision of each case by a well-qualified practitioner, making use of the services of the young physician, on the one hand, and of the specialist on the other."

Sisters of Mercy

THE CELEBRATION of the centenary of the founding of the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy on December 12, provokes all the usual thoughts that such an occasion does provoke, repetitious, and in their lesser degree, as true and beautiful as prayer. In another issue we shall have an article which describes the inception of the order by the Reverend Mother Mary Catherine McAuley in Dublin and a more detailed reference to its works than we could do justice to here. It was eminently appropriate that the celebration of these women who are so highly motivated by their faith should have taken the form of a triduum to Our Lady of Mercy. This restores a balance of emphasis to the meaning of holy days. It was impressive to learn that there are over 20,000 of these Sisters in practically all the English-speaking countries in the world, and over 9,000 of them in the United States. Besides the visitation of the sick and aged in their homes, the Sisters here have under their charge ninety-eight hospitals and several hundred educational institutions, a number of homes for business girls, orphanages and other institutions where they devote their lives to the performance of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. In one of the convents, we happen to know, a feast being visualized as fitting to the celebration, it was arranged, with turkey, stuffing, vegetables, pumpkin pie, coffee, cigars and cigarettes, and it was partaken of by one hundred poor persons as guests of the nuns.

Missions and the Depression

ONE GRAVE consequence of the reigning economic situation has been quite generally ignored. To what extent have the missions been affected by the fall of commodity prices and the curtailment of revenues? As is well known, many of the established missions have been to a considerable extent self-supporting, at least to the extent that schools and hospitals draw upon the districts in which they are situated. Now reports from various parts of Africa indicate poverty on a large scale. Trade in Nigeria is at a standstill; in Zululand and on the Gold Coast schools have been closed because teachers' salaries could not be paid. The island of Mauritius is economically prostrate; Madagascar coffee sells at one-tenth of its former price, thus drying up a major source of missionary income. Conditions in many parts of Asia are perhaps even worse, as a consequence of revolution and disorder, but one is relatively surprised to learn that the drop in quotations for cocoa has seriously impaired missionary work in Ceylon. Even quite remote islands have suffered. Thus the Viti Islands are at present so badly crippled by lack of markets that a genuine economic catastrophe seems unavoidable. The general situation is, of course, all the more deplorable in that times like these send a host of sufferers to the missions for aid which these cannot give. It is expected that a universal appeal for aid in the name of the Church will be sent out in the near future.

A Good Gang

THE SIX boys who recently on their way home discovered a broken rail on one of the main line railroads, and thereupon lit out at top speed, coats flying, and landed pell-mell at a police station so winded and exhausted they could scarcely gasp out their information, certainly achieved what is no doubt the dream of many a boy. They saved a train. Whereupon the dream did not end, but a few days later, a private railway car was shunted into the siding at their town and they were invited aboard. In the car, were the railroad superintendent of maintenance and way, the division foreman, the chief of the railroad police, and his assistant, the sergeant. The boys, who ranged in age from twelve to fourteen, and who respectively have brought honor to the names of Gelard Mazet, Dominick and Michael Fallacco, Anthony Del Vecchio, Salvator Dellaperuti and Clement Battoni, were congratulated by the railway men, and each presented with a twenty-dollar gold piece, something that most of them had never before seen. Then there was a ceremonious shaking of hands. Dazed but vastly conscious that all these things were right, the boys went into a short huddle and whispered huskily. Coming out of it, they faced the railroad men, and at a nod from the leader, opened their mouths and sang, "Silent Night, Holy Night." This indeed is our idea of one of life's happiest moments, and was a reminder that honor and brave service to their fellow men are the inspiration of most of our young gangs, when they are given the opportunity for such service, and it receives fitting recognition. It is needless to add, that the boys as they filed out made it very plain that it was their ambition, when old enough, to work on the railroad. The action of the railroad men was indeed admirable.

A Young Doctor Dies

THAT science has its heroes no one can doubt. Protest should never be made against the self-sufficiency and gratuitous dogmatism which recur with dismaying frequency in one type of mind attracted to the scientific field, unless the magnificent attributes of another type regularly found there also, are acknowledged at the same time. In the case of medical science particularly, perhaps because medical science is immediately concerned with the issues of life and death, the record of selflessness and dedication is

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dramatic and inspiring. A new name is now added to the roster—that of Alfred Seymour Reinhart, a young graduate of the Harvard Medical School, who died recently in circumstances that call for general honor. A gifted boy handicapped by poverty and ill health, he had struggled through college to a *magna cum laude,* and beyond that, through three years of medicine. Then his professional knowledge told him that his chronic heart disease had been augmented by a complication which would kill him in a few months, to the accompaniment of steadily increasing pain. He at once put himself into the hands of a specialist, as a laboratory case, and in addition began an exhaustive record of his subjective symptoms "in the modest hope," as his notes read, "that here and there may be a statement which may prove of value in the elucidation of some medical problem involving the psychology of the sick room." In order to be able to attend to these symptoms in their variety and completeness, he refused to take any alleviating drug, and endured a martyrdom of mounting anguish until two hours before his death. By the terms of his will, a post-mortem was conducted two hours afterward, that the findings on the case might be complete. In purpose and attitude this boy surely belongs with the doctor who gave himself piecemeal in X-ray experiments, or with those brave souls who deliberately incurred yellow fever in the campaign that finally wiped it out. The compensation for our tragic loss of such men is that thereby we at least learn what heroism can be.

No Horses

ORNAMENTAL but useless societies have always had a special appeal for us, though of course it is treason to strict duty to admit it. We do not mean especially those that take themselves seriously, like certain of the so-called patriotic societies, but rather those that cherish a little unreason. There are so many reasonable societies! We recall a Royal Bengal Bicycle Club, none of the members of which rode a bicycle or had ever been to Bengal. It used to meet in a basement bookshop and discuss various esoteric subjects with a sort of tacit understanding that everything that was said was only spoofing and truth was approached by indirection. It was as useless as molars to a chicken, but it did furnish fun for its members, and we still recall happily at odd moments some of the sly nonsense perpetrated there in perfectly ostensible seriousness. Another society that we recall, that started out in much the same way but came to a bad ending, was the Penguins, so named for no special reason, which used to number among its members some of the leading newspaper correspondents and special writers in Washington and some of the younger and progressive members of Congress. It started out by hiring a floor above one of the best restaurants in town, which catered meals for the club, and for a while was pleasantly amorphous in its aims or corporate activities. Then a rowdy element crept in and began organizing pageants and charades and lectures by distinguished speakers. It was not long before the society foundered. These reflections were aroused by reading of the Society in Dedham, Massachusetts, for the Apprehension of Horse Thieves, said to be the oldest and most influential social organization in that community. It met recently for its annual dinner and official business was quickly disposed of with the annual report: "Number of horses stolen during the year—none; number of horse thieves apprehended by members of the society—none."

TOM-TOMS AT THE CAPITOL

JUST two weeks of Congress, but the tune is pretty clear. Unless something happens it will turn out to be a session killed by its own sanguine temperament. We think that fundamentally the personnel is better and more in earnest than has been the case for some time. There are not a few relatively superior individuals in both Houses. The hush inspired by the possibility of a brilliant future has quashed what might otherwise have been much bad Democratic oratory. Middle-Western Progressives are in unusually fine fettle, having already proved their ability to win a political brush and being at least themselves convinced of superior economic knowledge. Nor are the Republicans, smarting from recent setbacks, without a modicum of sagacity. Even so, as we have indicated, it looks like a dead session. Unless something happens.

Take, for instance, the flurry over the moratorium. December 15 was the day on which receipts under war debt funding agreements would have been due from European nations. But party leaders refused to give the assurance that Congress would eventually ratify the President's move. The reasons advanced were somewhat extraordinary. Senator Borah declared that a special session should have been called during the summer to ratify the agreement, and that therefore he could assume no responsibility at the present time. Senators Smoot and Dill opined that the sums due ought to be paid in silver, at the "market price." Why the gentlemen from New England failed to suggest at this point that the payments could be made in wool or grape juice is not clear. At any rate there was thus raised a nice diplomatic and political fuss. All the ambassadors of foreign powers affected had to make calls at the State Department in order to be told that "delinquency" would not be charged against them.

The political problem is still more in keeping with the prevailing Lenz-Culbertson atmosphere. When the moratorium was being discussed, Mr. Hoover made an almost unparalleled effort to get in touch with the illustrious of the capitol. Airplanes even were utilized in a valiant attempt to slight no man. Whether or not the moratorium was a good thing is, therefore, beside the question. The point is that Congress, having been consulted, approved. To argue about this at the present juncture is the most futile and shabby kind

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of quibbling. It has just one advantage: it gives Mr. Hoover the opportunity to wax ironical and majestic —if he wishes to be either. One cannot well believe that the nation as a whole will fail to resent such inane caterwauling, bred of personal pique and supposed craftiness. And one can well think that Mr. Hoover, granted a change in tactics, could still emerge triumphant from the rather primitive gauntlet he has been forced to run.

For it is after all not difficult to see that the President is really less to blame for the present slump than is, let us say, Mr. Borah. This senatorial dignitary formed one part of the political-social-economic régime to which Mr. Hoover fell heir. It was not he who, a priori, shed any light on the causes which were to bring about our downfall. We recall no Borahesque remark to the effect that a decade of United States policy in dealing with German indebtedness was false and would necessarily lead to a shocking conclusion. Idaho fathered no wisdom on the subject of loans, fiscal control and discount rates. If therefore the public set out to attach stigmas to any particular person, Mr. Borah has as fair a claim to the title as anybody else. But he will doubtless escape. The President seems to be lying quite prone, and even very pseudo steam-rollers like Mr. McFadden of Pennsylvania can have the time of their lives.

There are certain things which Congress might legitimately be expected to accomplish. It might thrash out in a genuinely patriotic spirit the arguments which now press in from both sides to prevent the creation of a program likely to serve as a dependable recipe of national and international action. We are living in a perilously vague world—quite as vague, indeed, as the standard senatorial oration. Precisely what do we intend to say about the debts? Mr. Hoover, true to an unfortunate form, has proposed the establishment of a commission to deal with the matter. It has long since grown evident that such commissions are useless. They might mean a good deal in the hands of a President able to control the Congress. But one after another, the findings of these bodies have dribbled through the press into oblivion. Each has been of value to the serious professor of social politics, eager to profit by statistics otherwise difficult to secure. The effect on national action has, however, been less than nil.

Does the Senate have a program? Yes, to this extent: Western members are said to feel that increased taxation will be resented as "a contribution to help Europe pay its debts." But what do the gentlemen propose doing? Possibly Mr. McKellar, of Tennessee, speaks for them, asserting that since the Mellon thesis called for a readjustment of the British debt on the ground that the pound had been deflated, "all that Great Britain would have to do would be to continue to reduce the value of the pound sterling and she could continue to get her debt to the United States diminished." If a high-school lad employed such logic, he would go to the foot of the class. Debts and taxes are, whatever attitude toward them one may assume, very concrete matters not to be disposed of with bad epigrams. Accordingly one hopes that the public as well as its representatives will soon get the drift of analyses as competent as that which Mr. Walter Lippmann has contributed to the New York *Herald Tribune*. Mr. Lippmann shows that estimated receipts for the fiscal year will just about cover the costs of the World War, leaving other expenses to be paid out of borrowed money until tax increases can cover the deficit. And he concludes: "The people of this country face in really serious and practical form the problem of reducing the cost of government and of increasing the revenues of government." All else—debt collecting, moratorium opposing—is just so much trading in felt-lined blinkers.

In view of all these facts the President, it seems to us, has just three things to do: first, he must make a belated effort to swing Congress round to two simple ideas, fiscal objectivity and eagerness for fiscal reform; second, he ought himself to tell the nation, explicitly and in detail, the results of the moratorium conferences last June; third, he ought to pin at least a postage stamp over the eloquent lips of Senator Fess. Comment on this illustrious person's achievement is reserved for another place in this issue. The mere enumeration of the major needs demonstrates how far we are from possessing the efficient, unified government which the hour demands. And when intelligent people adjudge the work of Mr. Hoover they will ask not if he "caused the depression" (which is stupid) or whether his ideas have been enlightened (which is an academic question) but whether under his administration the government functioned with the efficiency required. The present Congress is the final test case.

It will doubtless be enlivened by not a few interesting debates. Nothing will keep the crucial problem of prohibition out of the arena. Several moves have already been planned to sponsor some such idea as a nation-wide referendum, and the East in particular seems massed behind the desire for repeal. One does not, however, expect any far-reaching decision within the next few months. What is said and done will influence coming political conventions and, beyond those, the attitude of the next administration. Even Mr. Hoover has adopted a curiously silent pose on the whole subject. That these developments signify a significant, even startling, change of the public mind no one will doubt. But who will venture to be more than decently optimistic even here? Short selling on the stock exchange will likewise secure not a little attention. On this point the manful right-about-face of Senator Watson is replete with meaning. If even he surmises that the honored institution of selling short deserves overhauling, the inference is that more and more people are attributing the continued fall of prices to grisly bears.

If there be anyone still unaware of the genuinely parlous condition in which the nation finds itself, let him cast an eye leeward to the Capitol.

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CRIME AND THE PRESS

By ERNEST A. DEWEY

The question of crime story consequences has long since interested newspaper publishers as well as moralists. Some time ago THE COMMONWEAL *published an article denouncing the criminal reporter and asserting that he is responsible for such youthful emulation of gangsters and other high-powered offenders. In the following paper, an experienced newspaper man explains how this point of view looks from behind the editorial desk. Mr. Dewey is frankly contemptuous of print. We by no means concur that whatever the cause of increasing crime, "publishing of crime news has nothing to do with it."—The Editors.*

EVERY newspaper editor in the land receives letters at intervals upbraiding him for publishing crime news and urging him to eliminate it from his columns. Nearly always the theory of this objection is that publication of stories of lawbreaking in the news pages constitutes an invitation to readers to go out and burgle the corner confectioner's or put somebody on the spot.

In the minds of these objectors a newspaper appears to be an emotional bomb exploded daily under the moral structure of society. A majority of these protesting letters and resolutions originate in the minds of poor half-baked cranks or moral do-gooders who spend their idle time writing letters to newspapers demanding that something be done about something and, accordingly, receive the scant consideration they deserve. There are, however, a tremendous number of sane and intelligent people who feel that the news of crime constitutes a definitely objectionable feature of the newspaper of today. They feel that crime news is not an indispensable part of the news and properly should occupy a minimum of news space. They feel that it exerts an unduly exciting influence upon the imagination of youth and certain mental types; that the playing up of crime news encourages crime; that the American press glorifies the American criminal; and, finally, that crime news plays a part in the daily press out of all proportion to its news value.

These objections will be evaluated in more or less orderly fashion in this article, for, as probably has been suspected, it is my contention that crime news occupies a justifiably important place in the newspaper of today and that such objections are insufficiently grounded in fact.

In our examination of the question let us disregard such publications as the *Christian Science Monitor,* which publishes no crime news, and the tabloids, which publish little else. These publications typify the wide extremes on both sides and, accordingly, are not truly representative of the American press.

Various newspapers, chiefly in the Middle West, have regarded the prominence of crime in their columns with some distaste and have experimented in devious fashion to avoid placing emphasis upon it. More than thirty years ago the publishers of the Topeka (Kansas) *Capital* invited the Reverend Charles M. Sheldon, Congregational minister and author of "In His Steps," to conduct that newspaper for a period to show "how Christ would run a newspaper." The Reverend Mr. Sheldon accepted. The incident attracted world-wide attention of the Fourth Estate at the time, but has been practically forgotten since. It was noted, however, that Dr. Sheldon's policies were not adopted as permanent upon resumption of management by the paper's owners.

More recently, on August 10, 1929, the Hutchinson (Kansas) *News* began an experiment to determine if crime news could be eliminated or reduced to an absolute minimum without damage to the paper as a whole. On that date it was announced that crime news would be debarred from any position of prominence, particularly the front page. A "Page One Box" advised that tales of "murders, embezzlements, thievery, degeneracy, companionate marriages, and other breaches of morals, law and public good taste" would be found on an inside page in a "Blood and Thunder Corner." Under that headline the crime news of the day was presented in the form of pills; Dr. Snook's murder trial was boiled down to a paragraph; a statutory assault story, played up by the conservative Kansas City *Star* to several columns, achieved a bare four lines; other news of crime was in proportion.

On August 15 the *News* published the following:

> For five issues now the *News* has succeeded in shooing the bank bandits, hi-jackers, gunmen, wife-killers, abductors and morons off the front page.
>
> The experience is an interesting one, anyway. The *News* feels that the front page is more than merely a page. It's the front of the house, the show window. No good housekeeper, no self-respecting merchant would permit the garbage, and trash and filth on the front porch, or in the front window.
>
> And so the *News* will continue trying to play up the better things, the more helpful, more constructive news on its front display window.

One example of the reaction to the Hutchinson experiment by other Kansas papers was expressed editorially by Paul A. Jones, one of the most widely quoted editors of the state, in his Lyons *Daily News:*

> The Hutchinson *News* is complimenting itself because it has moved crime news—what it calls "filth"—to an inside page. It should strive to be perfect and not put "filth" on any of its pages. It also should eliminate pictures of half-naked women. When a newspaper stands up, thumps itself on the chest and declares, "I am pure and holy," it opens the way for criticism by wicked and malicious brothers of the fraternity of which the editor of the Lyons *Daily News* is one.

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The Hutchinson paper abandoned the more drastic phases of its effort to maintain a crimeless front page after about four weeks, but it had, I believe, established a record. Similar experiments had been made in Omaha, Nebraska, and other cities, rarely lasting more than a week and without enough success to encourage adoption of the experimental effort as a permanent policy. The publishers of the Hutchinson *News* now maintain an office rule of avoiding use of front-page top-of-column headlines for crime stories unless the crime story clearly overshadows all other news. Other than this, crime news is handled no differently than any other news.

Many newspapers "play down" crime news to bolster their reputations for being conservative. The idealism of most of these sheets is very often rather hypocritical. The Kansas City *Star* is jeered by newspaper men all over the Central West for publicly priding itself on burying its "lurid and lavender" stories by printing them on inside pages. But on those inside pages the stories are given in minutest detail and notices are placed in prominent position on the front page which read like this: "Complete details of the hanging of the Home Trust bank bandits will be found on Page 12." Under such a policy it would be superfluous to add, "Be sure not to miss it!"

No newspaper has succeeded in finding a satisfactory substitute to fill the ostentatious void attendant on the supression or even the minimizing of crime news. In point of fact a newspaper which ceases to publish crime news actually ceases to be a "news" paper and thereafter is merely a publication.

The newspaper changes as the world around it changes. The parade of our civilization since 1900 has brought changes in newspaper reporting, editing, distribution and mechanics. The increasing prominence of crime in the news is one instance of that change.

In the days of the early giants of journalism a newspaper was a molder of public opinion, wielding unquestioned power by authority of its printed word and commanding respect. Now that power and respect has about vanished, and only the more subtly compelling force of publicity remains to journals today.

Just what is a newspaper in the language of today? Let us permit contemporary editors to define it. "The duty of a newspaper," says one, "is to hold a mirror up to life." Another says: "The modern newspaper is not trying to convert humanity but is trying to depict it." "When you lay down your evening paper," says still another, "you have translated into your own life-experience the fragments of a thousand lives brought to you in the day's news." These opinions, of course, are expressive of individual points of view, but they are widely quoted in the profession as explanatory of the frame of mind in which the modern newspaper man approaches his work. They are indicative of the transformation time has wrought in the Fourth Estate. Today's newspaper, instead of a molder of public opinion, has become somewhat of a mirror of the public mind. Through its columns flows the muddying stream of human frailty, sordidness and folly. Yesterday the newspaper was the painted portraiture of a master editorial artist with all the idealistic limnings. Today it is a photograph of stark reality.

Crime news occupies about the same importance in the news as it does in the mind of the average reader. If it is stressed, that is the reason. People like to read crime news. They read it for the same reason large numbers of them attend criminal trials, go to fires, read mystery or adventure novels or go to the movies. It attracts interest because it usually is full of action or suggested action. It is dramatic, and has the further glamor of being true drama. It has been said that "Morality does not make headlines," nor do newspaper readers expect it to. The unusual makes headlines. If morality was unusual enough to make headlines, society would be in a sorry fix. It is a psychological fact that most people like to read accounts of the illegal carryings-on of their fellows, their escapades and their embroilments with the law, because these accounts are the most intensely human side of any newspaper. There may be some readers who find a vicarious thrill by imagining themselves in the place of the lawbreaker just as others, of an equally subnormal type, may gloat over the misfortunes, mistakes or punishment of the other fellow because of the feeling of superiority they get out of it. The crime news is but a slightly distorted mirror of the impulses, repressions and innate desires that sleep in every brain.

Dr. A. A. Brill, a noted mental expert, recently said:

> Emotional control under pressure of society represents the tangible progress of civilization. The defective is one who is unable to assume the restrictions imposed upon him by civilization; he cannot readily control his emotions, hence he can readily commit all sorts of immoral acts. The normal man, though he may lie to his wife, and cheat about his income tax, does not and cannot become a habitual criminal.

It may be taken as self-evident that the basic social laws are not necessary to protect society against the normal man, for the reason that he is policed by his own intelligence. Laws are equally inoperative against the defective for the reason that, having no control over his emotions, they present no mental obstacle to an immoral act. The passage of social laws cannot automatically afford him control over himself. Nor can the suppression of emotional stimuli (considering, for the moment, that crime news is such) nor any other conceivable agency give him that control.

The emphasis on crime news has its parallels in past decades. It is, perhaps, the modern equivalent of the tales of conquest of the plains, of battles wherein "many redskins bit the dust." Previous to that, tales of piracy on the high seas engaged attention with their blood-curdling details of plank-walkings, looting and slaughter. Even history, with its lurid pages, has its attraction for the civilized reader with primitive and

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sadistic impulses. All of these made vivid reading, yet were they charged with promoting crime?

Is there not, after all, a strong possibility that crime news and other such outlets for primitive, sadistic impulses, rather than inflaming the instincts, serve instead to keep many a near-defective within the pale of respectability and the ranks of worthy members of society?

I will venture the assertion that no one ever was corrupted by a newspaper story. I will venture further to assert that anyone who could be corrupted by a newspaper story is not worth saving, and that any effort to save him must inevitably fail. Certainly nothing but a cracked brain could ever be incited to crime, however copiously the news columns may spread the saga of the malefactor. There is a vast difference between finding crime stories interesting or entertaining and being incited to criminality by them. There may be criminals who treasure their press notices, but no intelligent person will argue that they committed their crimes in order to get their names in the paper.

On the other hand, there can be no denial that the printing, emphasizing, even the enthusiastic playing up, of crime news constitutes an attempt, though sometimes indirectly, to apply a needed lash to whip up indignant public opinion, to create public disgust for legal procedure as full of holes as a Swiss cheese, to incite popular demand for a cleaning up of conditions.

It has been said that crime news adds glamor to crime and awakens a desire to emulate the criminal. That is very much like saying that crime news adds glamor to getting shot in the back, for surely the methods employed in gangland warfare have been publicized enough to be familiar to everyone.

It is charged that the American press glorifies the American criminal. I cannot believe that anyone supposes Alphonse Capone would have been fined $50,000 and given the extraordinarily severe sentence of eleven years in the penitentiary for failure to pay income taxes, if he had not been "glorified" by the newspapers.

I submit that in the period following the slaying in Los Angeles of little Marion Parker by the "nice boy bank clerk," Edward Hickman, no one was tempted to emulate the brutality of his crime. In the time elapsing between his crime and his execution Hickman —the boy who was a leader in "the sober, upright side of high-school life," who scarcely read newspapers, who was a youthful authority on constitutional history —became a living embodiment in the public mind of all that was damnable. His deed inspired horror and disgust, not a desire to imitate him. I will concede, however, that had it not been for popular feeling developed to fever heat by the newspapers, Hickman might be living today behind the walls of some madhouse instead of having met death in the electric chair.

Criminal lawyers frequently object that daily it is becoming more difficult to free their clients because "the case has been tried in the newspapers before it ever gets to court." Who does not recall instances of attorneys for lawbreakers insisting that their clients received sentences of undue severity when the arm of justice struck down with added weight because of "newspaper clamor"? It may be true that newspaper publicity assists but little in the apprehension of criminals, but it is as certainly true that many times "newspaper clamor" does assist in seeing to it that he is punished adequately when he is caught.

It is charged that crime news plays a part in the daily press out of all proportion to its news value. I insist that, since the annual crime bill is about the biggest bill the American people are compelled to pay, crime news is the biggest news in America. The Wickersham Committee's report insisted that $3,000,000 per day was a lamentably conservative estimate of the cost of crime in the United States. Anything which costs that much money is bound to be big news in any language. In addition to this, crime has increased in news value because this age has witnessed novelty in crime and criminal habit. Never before have we seen crime organized along the lines of sedate and sober business. It is news when criminals grow so efficient as to dominate whole cities. It is news when gang lords purchase palatial homes, hire butlers and social secretaries, don dress suits and try to crash into society. "Big shots" are not new to crime. We had Legs Diamonds, Al Capones and Bugs Morans in the gang world of old. But they were content with vulgar pleasures, vulgar associates and vulgar environment. Lowbrow criminals with highbrow tastes are new.

Please remember that I am not endeavoring to discuss the causes for the increase in crime in this article. I merely am contending that the publishing of crime news had nothing to do with it. Crime news is not a cause, it is an effect. Crime has increased in news importance as the menace of crime has increased in importance to society. The day does not pass when the newspaper does not throw a searchlight on these conditions. The newspaper deserves no rebuke for chronicling the effrontery of our criminals. The rebuke is deserved by an apathetic citizenship which complacently permits their brazenness to be flaunted in its face. If the American public can read, day after day, of baby-killers, gang murderers, wholesale slaughterings in broad daylight, and placidly accept these things as part of the established order, then the American people have lost their intestinal investiture and there is no hope for the nation. Suppression or minimizing of the facts will not improve the situation. It would be criminal indeed for the newspapers of the land to conspire with other informative agencies to hide from the people the knowledge that a foreign enemy was approaching our shores. Yet the army of crime is promoting its active warfare within our borders. Is that of no particular interest to us? Has it much, or little, news value? Should we minimize that menace by playing it down?

I respectfully submit that it is the social responsibility of the American press to print this news to the last blood-curdling detail.

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THE RELIGION OF DEATH

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

EVEN in this time of extraordinary happenings few things more singular, or more significant, have occurred than the almost unanimous chorus of approval and praise with which the secular press has greeted Mrs. Margaret Sanger's autobiography. Merely to say that the life story of the great leader of the birth control revolution has been favorably received would be like saying that Lindbergh met with a cordial reception when he came home from Paris; or like saying that a certain amount of interest has been aroused in the people of India by the work of Mahatma Gandhi, or in the people of Russia by Lenin. True as all these statements are, they seem to fall a little short of adequacy. The reviewers of Mrs. Sanger's book in the daily newspapers and in the weekly and monthly magazines, together with the writers of editorials, interviews and special articles, treated the publication of the work as an event of capital importance. And unquestionably, they were right. In less than twenty-five years, the whole American press—which, if the drama holds up a mirror to nature, is certainly the mirror of society—has changed from reflecting the public determination utterly to ignore the subject of sex (except when sex provided the juicy materials for scandalous and sensational news) to reflecting most faithfully the new public determination to consider sex as a predominant subject of interest—subordinate only to hunger and the preservation of life itself. Well, sex always was that, though it was not talked about, or written about, as that; but now it is. But it is not that fact, important as it is, which is the particular point of interest in connection with the reception given by the press to Mrs. Sanger and her gospel. It is rather the peculiar respect, the singular reverence, in some cases a sort of ambiguous awe, manifested by so many of the writers and speakers. It was as if Mrs. Sanger were recognized and hailed as some sort of saint or prophet of some new religion.

Of course she has been compared to Joan of Arc; but that was bound to happen. Almost any girl or woman nowadays who becomes momentarily famous, or notorious, in promoting any sort of cause, promptly becomes the Joan of Arc of this, that or the other "crusade" (God save the mark!). Miss Lucy Gaston Page was the Joan of Arc of the anti-cigarette crusade. Mrs. Carrie Nation was the Joan of Arc of the anti-saloon crusade. Mrs. Mabel Walker Willebrandt was the Joan of Arc of the prohibitionists until she recanted and became the Joan of Arc of the California wine-brick crusade. A litany of modern Joan of Arcs might be composed that would be longer than the litany of the saints. The descriptive phrases of the modern litany, however, are much more fervent not to say fulsome than those of the ancient one. But the modern one had the advantage of being written by newspaper sob-sisters and publicity experts. All of which is more or less complimentary to the Maid of Domrémy, and to the religion she confessed; but certainly it testifies with a strong if fantastic sort of eloquence to mankind's irrepressible instinct to give religious honors to the objects of its admiration.

About the time that Mrs. Sanger, or her publicity director, was taking tactical advantage of the temporary popularity attached to the word "moratorium," by advising the women of the world to cure most of its ills, or anyhow the chief of its ills, by enforcing a moratorium on all births for at least two years, the American Woman's Association bestowed upon Mrs. Sanger the medal which each year it awards to the woman whose services to humanity have been most distinguished. Whereupon the editorial page of the New York *Herald Tribune,* whose devotion to Mrs. Sanger is even greater than its devotion to the Republican party—for while it will at times adversely criticize President Hoover it never falters in its laudation of Mrs. Sanger—burst into psalmody:

> Mrs. Sanger deserves this honor; she deserves more honors than a world against whose darkness of mind she has fought bravely and consistently for twenty years is ever likely to give her. Mrs. Sanger has carved, almost single-handed and in the face of every variety of persecution, a trail through the densest jungle of human ignorance and helplessness. She has been many times arrested, assailed and covered with mud—which remains perhaps the most substantial tribute to her pioneering genius. Pretty nearly everything and everyone has been against her—pulpits and legislatures and newspapers, public men and private citizens, and whole regiments of the prejudices, fears, bogys and dragons that still infest the mind of civilized man.

It is quite true, I think, that some twenty years ago, when Mrs. Sanger was beginning her public preaching, most of the pulpits and legislatures and newspapers and public men, and the bulk of private citizens who are molded, not to say manipulated, as to what thinking they are capable of doing by the pulpits and the press and the public men, were, as the *Herald Tribune* says, "against her." But it is even more evident that today the tide runs the other way. Which is why I have termed Mrs. Sanger the leader of the birth control revolution; for it is no longer a mere movement, a forlorn hope, a desperate cause; it is a revolution, not yet wholly legalized and given its constitution, though well on its way toward that consummation, and emphatically successful in accomplishing the first phase of all revolutions, which is to break down whatever order of society is existent when it starts its course. And its success, I believe, is due to that element which

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gives strength to all social revolutions, its religious element.

Years ago, long before birth control had become respectable, almost conventional, as it is today, and when its pioneers were really facing the sort of opposition chronicled by the lyrical feminists of the *Herald Tribune,* I happened to know one of these pioneers. She was a highly capable physician. Her deeds of private and mostly hidden charity were numerous and noble. She toiled for the health and well-being (as she understood those terms) of women and children with splendid zeal and pertinacity and devotion. Like so many social revolutionaries she professed a complete disbelief in, and indeed a convinced opposition to, religion. Lenin's phrase that religion is the opium of the people had not yet become known, but had it been known, as a physician she would have certainly adopted the slogan with enthusiasm.

But one night, at a Greenwich Village party, when cocktails were going, I made the discovery which threw so much light upon the birth control movement. For, on that occasion, while in a somewhat exalted mood, all inhibitions being temporarily in abeyence under the influence of a little alcohol and a great deal of emotional excitement aroused by the recent failure of some birth control legislation, this ardent disciple of Mrs. Sanger revealed the core of the faith that was in her, and in the movement. She was like a pythoness in the temple at Delphi, for she prophesied, and she vouchsafed a revelation. O yes, she declared, there was a god; the world really needed a religion. She only fought the God and opposed the religion that held woman in bondage: the man-made God, the man-controlled religion of the Jews and the Christians. O yes, there was a god—but that god was female; it was the female principle, and the world was now to know Her dispensation; She had sent Her avatars and prophets and martyrs into the world to herald Her coming; the day and the hour of the woman was at hand; and all women, Her children, would be avenged after the centuries of slavery and oppression they had endured, and the man-made God and His religion would be banished.

No doubt, next day, the prophetess herself, sipping her black coffee, before beginning the day's very practical and beneficent work, was the first to smile as she remembered some of her statements; but they were not all inspired by cocktails. The cocktails merely loosened her tongue, for the ideas, the mystical belief, then expressed, were not invented on the spot, they were released for expression. They are implicit if not yet explicit in the birth control revolution of today.

In no way more than the manner in which the birth control revolution makes use of science does it reveal more unmistakably its religious element. It does exactly what nearly all religious apologists do, namely, it seizes upon and uses in its own behalf all the scientific theories or facts which support its own interests, and denies or ignores all that counts against it. This is only what might be expected in the case of most religions, which after all are not, and cannot be, based upon science, but stand independent of science, except, of course, for such forms of religion as are obviously contradicted by the demonstrated facts of science. Christianity, at least Catholic Christianity, occupies that position of complete autonomy. But birth control professes to be completely in accord with, if not to be wholly based upon, the findings of science—yet with an unshaken confidence which is magnificent as a mark of zeal, but which is completely inconsistent with the criterions of science, the birth control enthusiasts who really are of the household of the faith brush aside all scientific theorizing or demonstrations which tell against their claims that birth control not only tends to promote the health and longevity of the race, and its improvement, and its permanence, but is by far the most important factor. For while it is quite true that a large body of physicians, and statisticians, and sociologists, support the birth control claims in these respects, it is even more certain that a large, indeed a larger, group of equally well qualified scientists deny and controvert them.

In the very issue of the *Herald Tribune* which swung the censers of adulation before the image of Mrs. Margaret Sanger, the news columns carried a despatch saying that the British Association for the Advancement of Science was discussing the danger of the depopulation of Europe because of the reduction in the birth rate of Western races and nations. And in the November issue of the *Forum,* Dr. Louis I. Dublin, chief statistician for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, says that birth control is the chief agency in this unquestionable decline. But it is not merely a European problem. The United States is no more self-sufficient in the matter of its population than in the matter of its finances, or its problems of industry, or of peace and war. Vital statistics, says Dr. Dublin, now show that

> the common expectation of an exceedingly large population in the future—one consistent with the enormous natural resources of the United States—will not be realized. We are evidently not destined to become the great reservoir of humanity where liberty and prosperity are to reside side by side.

Well, the birth control priests and priestesses will undoubtedly retort: "What does it matter?" They may say: "Not mere brute quantity, but high and radiant quality is what we desiderate. We shall breed out the baser and grossly prolific types; we shall breed in the higher and rarer and longer-lived free men and women of the future. We have already broken down all the barriers of custom and conventionality, and most of the legal and religious opposition to our creed and practice. Tomorrow we shall control not only the private sexual habits of our own devotees and sympathizers: we shall control the very gates of life, by controlling the state, and then the one unyielding enemy of our progress, the Catholic Church, will be dealt with

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as all treasonable forces have always been dealt with by enlightened states."

But Dr. Dublin, so far as the expectation of the birth control hierarchy that it will produce a virile and long-lived super-humanity is concerned, says, "No"; and many other scientists agree with him. According to him and his school, the forces set in operation by birth control seem much more likely to produce a nation in which elderly and therefore less virile people will increasingly predominate.

> A very disturbing picture indeed could be painted of the distorted social and economic conditions which may result from the changed internal organization of our future society.

Will the birth control theologians and canonists pay any attention to Dr. Dublin? Or to the doctors who link up the use of contraceptives with the increase of nervous diseases, and insanity, and cancer? Of course not; except to quote the scientists who are on the other side of the controversy, while still claiming, of course, that "science" is all in the favor of birth control, and against the "obscurantists and the superstitious," particularly the Catholic Church. And have I been unduly fantastic in what I have put into the mouths of the birth control priests and priestesses in what I have written in the preceding paragraph—concerning their hope to control the gates of birth, by controlling the legal powers of the state, and thereby making their dogmas compulsory, and treating those who oppose them as public enemies? If you think so, read what Dr. Clarence C. Little wrote in a recent number of *Scribner's Magazine* (which, incidentally, refused to publish a Catholic answer to Dr. Little's outrageous misrepresentations, and his even more outrageous threats), and read what Mrs. Charles A. Beard had to say in her review of Mrs. Sanger's book in the *Literary Review*. Both clearly stated their belief that the disciplining of the Catholic Church by the State in the matter of birth control legislation was a necessity. Read also what many other advocates of compulsory eugenics, of state castration of the so-called unfit, and of state control of the birth rate, both as to numbers and as to the quality of the stock to be permitted to breed. And then do not dismiss their views as the mere vaporings of eccentric souls. Like Communism, the birth control revolution is at its center of action controlled and driven with immense (even if not permanent) force by a religious zeal. It has already swept over the whole Western world. Apparently, only the Slavs, especially the Slavs within the Russian territories, have not been affected by the falling birth rate —the Slavs of Russia, and the yellow and black peoples of the Orient and of Africa increase and multiply. Birth control is a religion. It is the antithesis of the Christian religion, for instead of coming that mankind may have life and that more abundantly, it has come to give us death.

Will the world accept the sentence? For it is not a matter of inevitable doom. Allied as the birth control religion is to the religious fatalism of the Orient, the Western world is not wholly under the yoke of such a slavery; the Western world knows better, and can still use its will. As Dr. Dublin writes:

> Little have the proponents of the birth control movement realized how powerful a force they have released and what serious national and international consequences would follow in the train of their propaganda . . . but there is very reason to believe that when our people perceive the consequences that are following from our restrictionist immigration policy and from the reduced size of American families, a real effort will be made to alter the situation.

Such an effort indeed has already been started. Studies of the most recent vital statistics prove that American Catholics now have a birth rate tending to increase more than four and a half times faster than the non-Catholic population. There is no doubt that birth control has become birth prevention to a large degree outside of the Catholic part of the population. The religion of life still prevails where Catholics are concerned.

Shepherds

A shepherd is a gentle man,
With mildness in his gaze,
Care for dumb creatures in his hands,
And kindness in his ways;
God sent a Babe into the world,
Gentleness manifest,
He laid Him down with ox and sheep,
This Shepherd of the Blest.

A shepherd is a lonely man,
Wide spaces in his eyes.
Reading the weather in the winds,
And portents in the skies;
A Babe to youth and manhood grown,
With loneliness His share,
Sheltered the helpless in His arms,
Gave to mankind His care.

To shepherds in the long-ago,
First shone a wondrous star,
Because their ways were calm and slow,
Tranquil as star-rays are;
To their keen hearing, wont to catch
Faint stirring 'midst their sheep,
Came first the heavenly message, sent
As they their watch did keep.

Hastened they then with reverent prayer,
Naught theirs to give of gold,
Naught save young lambs to lay beside
The Babe, in that sweet fold;
Jesus, in a poor manger bed,
Felt their warm comforting,
Laying on them His tender hands,
Began His shepherding.

MAY T. BURNETT.

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AS CONGRESS MEETS

By OLIVER McKEE, JR.

WITH the Democrats numerically strong enough in the Seventy-second Congress, in both House and Senate, to veto any administration bill presented as a party measure, President Hoover until the end of his present term will lack the dependable Republican majority in Congress, which is essential if the administration is to exercise any control at all over legislation. Before a *fait accompli,* the shedding of tears is of no avail. Mr. Hoover, like any commander in the field, must fit his plans to the terrain ahead of him. Specifically, he must deal with a legislature that has capitulated to the political opposition. As Congress assembles again on Capitol Hill, this question is on the tongue of returning members: How much cooperation may the President expect from the Democrats in Congress, from the leaders who believe their party is on the crest of the wave that will sweep it to victory, and place it in control of the national administration in March, 1933?

In ordinary times, the answer would be simple; the Chief Executive and Congress would be at odds from the moment the presiding officers called the two houses together. These, however, are extraordinary times; the White House, indeed, has informally cautioned us that what the country faces today is an emergency second only to war. It was on this basis that Mr. Hoover made his appeal for bipartizan support on his one-year debt holiday, and for his plan to bolster up the nation's financial system and to restore public confidence in its soundness. On both propositions, congressional backing is essential; and the President, in calling to the White House, Democratic as well as Republican leaders, received assurances that both groups would get squarely behind his economic program. Aside from the psychological value inherent in a bipartizan backing, there was a very practical reason why the President sought in advance the coöperation of both political groups. In neither House did the Republican party have votes enough to put through the needed legislation single-handed, and if the moratorium is to be ratified, and if the President's plans for financial reforms are to be made effective, it can only be done with the help of some Democratic votes.

Even the most hide-bound of Democrats was ready to admit the need for rising above partizanship. When President Hoover called congressional leaders to the White House the evening of October 6, the conditions facing our banking system were going from bad to worse. Because of fears that had little enough basis in fact, but which were none the less potent in their reactions, depositors were taking their money out of the bank, and hoarding it in attic and in stocking. Developments abroad, more particularly the threatened bankruptcy of Germany, and Britain's abandonment of the gold standard, placed an additional strain on the American financial system. What was needed was a bold and dramatic stroke to restore confidence, and not only to bolster up the banking system. Democrats stood to gain as much by the success of these efforts as the Republicans. For party lines do not divide the banking community, and deposits of Democrats as well as those of Republicans stood in jeopardy.

Under these conditions, the Democrats could hardly have refused to coöperate with the President, even a Republican President. The eyes of the country are fixed more closely on Congress just now than they have been for many a year. In the boom days, lately lamented, when the Treasury was piling up its $500,000,000 surpluses, when money poured into its vaults faster than Congress could spend it, when prosperity and profits were widely distributed, the average voter paid little enough attention to what Congress did or did not do. He was too busy with his own affairs. As prosperity disappeared, the set-up changed. With millions unemployed, with dividends and salaries cut all down the line, with a feeling of insecurity existing even among the employed, people naturally ask, "What is the President going to do about it?" When there is a pinch in the pocketbook, the difference between a Republican and a Democrat is the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. If the Republican President has a plan to offer, the rank and file of the Democrats will hold their leaders to account if they refuse to give the President an even break. Through his moratorium and banking proposals, Mr. Hoover has answered the questions by presenting a definite relief program.

Another fact must loom large in the calculations of Democratic strategists: 1932 is a presidential year. Around the corner, they feel, lies the best chance of capturing the national administration since Warren G. Harding entered the White House. Politics at best is full of uncertainties; no one individual can control the ebb and flow of its tides. The party in the saddle is usually held to account when there is a temporary decline in national prosperity. Those with an empty dinner-pail in their hands find in the party in power a natural target for protest votes. Public opinion, however, an unstable element at best, may swing the other way if the party out of power tries to throw a monkey wrench into the administration's efforts to break the grip of the depression, or if, while Rome burns, the opposition prefers obstructionist tactics and partizanship to coöperation. Democratic leaders are not unmindful of these risks. Even if Mr. Hoover's plan proves a dud, and even if it brings with it no permanent help to American business, the Democrats will lose nothing in joining in a bipartizan effort to give the

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program a thorough and unqualified trial. In fact, in the election campaign they would be in a far stronger position than they would be if withholding their support, the program failed to fulfil expectations. Were this to happen, many voters would hold the opposition responsible, and their votes, as well as their sympathies, might well go to the administration in power. The Democrats have had perforce to move cautiously; there is dynamite both to the left and the right of the path.

It is not inconceivable indeed that the Seventy-second Congress may turn out to be remarkably free from partizanship; freer at least, than some have predicted. When times are hard, and on the eve of a presidential election, the opposition usually comes to Capitol Hill ready for partizan attacks on the administration from start to finish. Because of his successful appeal to both parties for support on a program of unity in economic action, Mr. Hoover has spiked in advance the guns of at least one Democratic battery. Partizanship of course has not been buried, but bipartizan support is taken for granted on certain projects, and this spirit may extend to certain other lines of legislative endeavor. Because of the difficulties which the Treasury faces, and because of the need for governmental economy, the President will ask Congress for little legislation that will involve substantial appropriations of public moneys. Lacking a Republican majority, the administration will probably avoid through the session recommendations for legislation on controversial matters.

On the whole, the administration will, in all likelihood, give its blessing only on those projects for which substantial bipartizan support seems assured. Caution, too, may well be the maxim among the Democrats. If they try to tinker with the tariff, or seek to put through radical legislation, they will run as a party certain risks at the polls next November. Responsibility with power is not always a desideratum; and once the Democratic managers in Congress formulate a program of their own, as a party matter, they must share the responsibility that under our form of government inheres in the assumption of power.

The President was a little less successful in his suggestion for a one-year moratorium on debts and reparations than, at this writing, he appears to have been in his plan for strengthening the American banking system, and bolstering the national credit structure. The latter proposal affected the American people directly. Only a part of the electorate, on the other hand, is world-minded, and even now the moratorium is not without its critics. Though Congress will approve the proposal for a one-year moratorium, it will not do so without debate. Under the leadership of anti-internationalists, such as Senator Hiram Johnson of California, congressional foes of debt cancellation or reductions will make it plain that they do not approve the administration's present moratorium policy, and what seems to be behind the curtain—a further scaling down of Europe's debts to the United States. On the war debts, coöperation between the President and Democratic leaders in Congress seems limited to the one-year moratorium. A proposal to extend the holiday, or to scale down the war debts, will not in advance be assured of Democratic support.

The President scored a personal triumph when the American Legion went on record as opposing any further demands upon the Treasury at this time by the able-bodied, whether veterans or not. Both Democrats and Republicans among the veterans voted for this resolution. Yet it is by no means certain that his appeal for bipartizan support on this proposition will be followed by other national groups. The Seventy-second Congress may see more than one drive launched to open the Treasury for the benefit of a special group. There are plenty of individual projects afoot, both among Democrats and Republicans, for unemployment insurance, and direct federal help for the unemployed. Out of these may come a drive for the type of federal aid legislation of which the President disapproves, and a show-down will probably show plenty of Democratic votes against the President.

By way of summary, the President faces Congress with reasonable assurances of support for the essential elements in his financial program, both foreign and domestic. The coöperation of the Democrats is limited, but within those limits should be reasonably satisfactory to the President. If business improves this winter and spring, if the local communities take care of their unemployed, if the Geneva conference makes some real progress toward lightening the burden of Old World armaments, and if national confidence is restored in the next few months, the President should not want for continued coöperation from the leaders of both groups on the basic elements of his program.

Politics nevertheless will be there waiting for its chance. On certain things, the opposition will coöperate with the President because coöperation is advantageous. Where, however, the President stands to gain politically through Democratic support of an administration measure and to strengthen his position in 1932, coöperation need hardly be expected. Partizanship will then dictate the policies of the opposition, and the Democrats will be out to upset the apple cart, playing the game of politics by its time-honored rules.

Noël

O waiting Love, foretold in days
Of gentle snows and peaceful ways,
In nights long, eloquent and still,
With portents riding every hill,
And every polished star intent
Awaiting Thee—O glad event
Whose herald Joy goes on before
To, humble, enter every door,
Bearing men happiness unsought,
That Thou hast planned—that Thou hast bought.

MARGARET TUCKER.

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CONNOISSEURS ON THE SPOT

By TERENCE O'DONNELL

THE TIMES, they tell us, are not so good in Paris: the paintings they march badly. *La crise* is beginning to make its reverberations felt astern of the Deux Magots, and the entrepreneurs of the old sixth arrondisement are frankly worried. We have often heard it said that art and commerce travel diverse paths, and it is therefore perhaps curious that the condition of uncertainty in the art world is paralleled by the universal depression of commerce. Whatever else the French may be, they are astute merchandisers and not quite without the desirable talent of being able to make two francs sprout where but a centime grew before. We can imagine the art dealer of three decades or so ago drawing up a five-year plan on the following premises: England dictates the attire for the world's games and sports, as befits a beef-eating nation. As only gourmets have real appreciation for art, *La Belle France* shall be art arbiter of the world.

Not that the art of the world did not need reforming, perhaps. The misfortune was, that the wrong factors concerned themselves with reform. Their viewpoint on art was superficial, and occupied itself with technique and oddity. Oddity and technique, as any good merchandiser knows, constitute the two things necessary to make any one thing appeal to the limited connoisseur public. That same public, satiated with the pleasing academics of the Mid-Victorian and Barbizon schools, was become inert; its wealthy constituents needed a shock to wrest them out of their lethargy and make them become paying customers again.

We can imagine the American traveler of perhaps a decade or so ago, qualified to become a connoisseur by reason of having a million, strolling calculatingly into a gallery or two with the object of becoming the proud owner of a collection of paintings on his own account. We can concede that, being a self-made man of fair intelligence, he had a definite idea of what a picture should be. He had a right to expect that an artist, as master of brush and vision, would paint a picture pleasant to look at. He may even have had the courage to sidestep a beefy Degas ballet scene and acquire a few pleasant specimens by various unknowns. But what he was unable to sidestep were the mercenary American expatriates resident on the Left Bank who in the very nature of things could not fail to remain cognizant of this new Croesus in their midst. He was "steered" into the proper galleries not above making certain financial arrangements vulgarly known as payment of commission. For the first time our would-be connoisseur stood face to face with the work of Matisse, the patron saint (or should one say demon?) of the Fauves. If the connoisseur hesitated and dared to explain he was interested less in technique and more in pleasing pictures, it is doubtful if he could withstand the ensuing Gallic shrug of horror. "Thing of a thing!" Did he not know that the "story picture" was outmoded; that, in fact, such nonsense went out when Cézanne came in? Mercenary critics and art "authorities" indirectly added their praises to the claque. "Impressive," "marvelous harmony of coloring," "elements of strength"—these or whatever else were the *clichés* of the moment enmeshed him in their web. And the net result was that he sailed for home the proud, if doubtful, possessor of as ghastly a collection of isms as one could expect to find anywhere.

The American artist, growing and developing in his native habitat, soon began to find something was wrong. It was not alone that he was handicapped by the childish habit we all have, to consider the imported product better than the domestic because of the accidental tag of a label. No. He was being forced to become cognizant of whole schools of isms. Knowledge of principles and elements of composition and design, individual technique he had developed perhaps at considerable effort and sacrifice, all these soon went overboard after he visited the rickety nests of the Cubists, Fauves, Futurists and Vorticists of Paris. He now began to spend valuable time endeavoring to unlearn the "silly academic processes" upon which all presumably good work was based. Once he may have thought there was beauty in the geometrical solidity of an American skyscraper, and had successfully handled the interplay of lines and solids. But Paris opened his eyes and, when he came home again, ruler and compass and silly academic processes passed beyond his ken. He still treated of subjects in the mass, but the erstwhile austere geometry of his skyscraper pictures disappeared. They rippled, they bulged, became biliously sulphuric monstrosities which, however much they might have been sulphur-and-molasses to the lowbrows, were lobster mayonnaise to the cognoscenti. But still he found it impossible to acquire a Daimler and a château in the country as the Frenchmen he imitated had done. The French entrepreneur refused to accept his work for sale; the American dealer remained wary of him as an upstart coming back from a year in France wearing a false label. Gradually he did violence to his art: his canvases became thick impastos labeled "Abstractions" which no one—dealer, connoisseur or art lover—could understand at all.

Now we will grant that the American artist was sincere. He saw there was a wave of propaganda favoring the techniques of the "advanced" French schools and he would have been a poor business man had he not endeavored to ride its crest. Furthermore, his artist soul may have rebelled at academic limitations, and endeavored to find the magic solution in any one of the isms. But having committed himself

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well-nigh irrevocably, he finds no Moses capable of welding the warring factions and leading devotees out of the desert of the isms into the promised land.

What the American artist and the American connoisseur as well failed to take into consideration was not a mere matter of technique or color, but a whole historical and sociological viewpoint intrinsically alien to the American temperament. Sanity for the artist and patronage by the connoisseur rests in flight from the whole multitude of imitation Cézannes, Manets, Monets, Renoirs, Degases, Pissaros, Legers, Braques, Picassos, Matisses, Utrillos and Laurencins which have inflicted themselves upon the American scene like alien garlic. Their ways are not our ways, their sarcasm is not our sarcasm, their ugliness is alien to our spirit. Like the decaying social structures and emotional misbalance of the foreign living which the alien art attempts to picture, its modernism is but one phase of a deliberate cult of ugliness whose apologia, appropriately enough, may be found in the pages of "Cakes and Ale." There Somerset Maugham's hero wambles thus:

> "I do not know if others are like myself, but I am conscious that I cannot contemplate beauty long. For me no poet made a falser statement than Keats when he wrote that first line of Endymion. . . . Beauty is perfect, and perfection (such is human nature) holds our attention but for a little while. . . . Beauty is that which satisfies the aesthetic instinct. But who wants to be satisfied? It is only to the dullard that enough is as good as a feast. Let us face it: beauty is a bit of a bore."

Maugham writes so, since in his own approach to life and art he is a natural though an outlander apologist for the whole modern theory of art—Rousseau's childish fantasies, Gaugin's depravities, Laurencin's pale pink mayhems and Epstein's inhuman and presumptuous brutalities. But since its whole theory is illogical as well, we can expect Maugham to contradict himself and he does. In the context of the above quotation he states: "Beauty is an ecstasy . . . that is why the criticism of art, except insofar as it is concerned with beauty and therefore with art, is tiresome."

Depending upon his training and perhaps his religious outlook, anyone may have his own explanation for the modernistic preoccupation with ugliness, and its tendency to conceive the world of form in the grotesque and obscene outline of a cretinic abstraction or an African fetish. Earnest students of art trends may consider the isms as a righteous revolt against genteel art cursed with the academic manner, true jazz choruses for a jazz-mad age. But to the public and the connoisseur who willy-nilly must cater vicariously to the needs of that public, the foreign gospel of disorientation spells disgust and catastrophe. The public is a simple soul, and likes to see a picture when it sees a painting. The artist, by permitting himself to become involved in labyrinth upon labyrinth of abstraction has cut himself aloof from the people it is his right and privilege to serve. Even a newspaper cartoonist can smile at the hackneyed jargon of the superiority of life to art, the glib prating of "pure paint" and "significant form." He knows that art should mirror life with vision: that the true artist should attempt to achieve with paint or chisel what the sincere writer attempts with ink and paper.

One school of the modern technique bids the neophyte to draw lines at random, then squint, and paint in whatever design or image the conjunction and confluence of the haphazard lines suggest. That is how aimless modern art has become, following after false gods. We have been told that Cézanne, that black sheep of the Impressionists, was an expert draughtsman, but gradually emancipated himself from the tyranny of line and form. Very interesting and edifying, but if the beginner is not trained to that mastery, when shall mastery ever come?

The whole truth is, the American artist has sold his birthright for a mess of pottage served on a foreign dealer's plate. He has neglected his opportunity and possible patrons have gone abroad with their fat dividend checks to complete his fleecing and starvation. He has permitted wily foreigners to hoist his possible connoisseur patron upon the horns of a dilemma; for times being slack and the isms no longer readily salable, the dealer is dusting off the Mid-Victorian, Second Empire and Barbizon masterpieces in his garret, and touting them as the coming vogue. The tragedy is, that not so long ago the connoisseur may have let such go from his own collection for a song; and the comedy, that those benighted paintings actually cater to the simple public's demand that a picture tell a story. The award to a "story picture" at the current and thirtieth Carnegie Institute International Exhibition, and to an American artist at that, is one straw showing which way the wind is blowing. The day of the isms is over.

The remarkable and sane developments in modern American architecture have come about with very few American artists possessing sanity enough to conceive an adequate pictorial complement to the inviting interiors. When we set against current architectural vigor the senility, the vague abstractions, the slacking up of modern art, no wonder commissions have gone to those few outstanding artists whose talent rests securely in the traditions of the older masters, however well they borrow from the advancing visions of today. Churches, public buildings, banks, schools without number, could have afforded work for a life-time to any artist willing to keep even a tenuous hold on sanity. Connoisseurs, with the widening of the American horizon, would have been glad to patronize in the true sense of the term any artist who had sufficient faith in his own individual concept, vision and technique to attempt to attain mastery. But what have we now? Gilded mausoleums holding grinning and lewd foreign abstractions which the connoisseur reluctantly opens to the public occasionally, and with a supercilious smile. Depleted bank accounts, which forbid him, an he had any heart left, to replace them with local imitations of the same abstractions. We have magnificent buildings,

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bare inside as Hubbard's pantry. We have living-rooms where mirrors glare, because the mirror-makers at least are resourceful, and cannily show the picture-less people what they wish to see. And what people wish to see is the American man or woman handsome and pretty in the American scene: drawn upstanding and symmetrical to the life—not with any clumsy Cézanne drawing or drab tinting but in a color scheme befitting a race used to drenching its beefsteak with brilliant red ketchup.

Tollon Berries

When the alameda, embowered, gay on a gracious day,
To the Mission at Santa Clara wiled the pueblo of San José,
Lugardo, a pueblo Indian, so heirs of the sight believe,
Joined the fiesta procession toward the Mission on Christmas eve,
To squat in the rose-curtained cloisters until shown at the Midnight Mass
The tinseled and tuckered Christ Child, brother on last year's grass.

About him the lords of the valley, red-sashed, knightly and tall,
Loped their extravagant stallions, Chaboya, Boroques, Bernal.
Trappings seething in silver. In saddle-bags bulking the gold—
State for adobe temple; solace for ailing and old.
Array but a lone bowl of limestone, gleeful, he gamboled along
Filling it from the wayside with fruit of the wild tollon,
The clustery, crimson berry crushed for his people's wry wine;
But bauble aflare for a baby. It was for the Baby Divine.

On his knees at the belfry's bidding by the manger alight in the aisle,
As his bowl Lugardo thrust forward, trancing the following defile,
Trancing the chimes, as gleeful and as clear in the common sight,
The image snatched at the berries as the veriest baby might.
And, banning a prank of the candles, for decades to duty with mirth
The pueblo arriving was wheedled by a tiny hand, fixed, darting forth.

"Then why failed it, the quaint little image?" Bronze and olden the bell,
Calling the past through the orchards, if heeded intently, will tell.
Like Lugardo, it trudged from the valley, one of a vivid, wide train,
When highways were righted too narrow and drab for the banners of Spain.
But, abrupt in its hedges of houses as the alameda today
To the village of Santa Clara drives the city of San José,
On Christmas eve, when behooves it to mellow a breaking throng,
It sets up in all its casements bowls of the gorgeous tollon.

HUGH ENNIS.

MECHANICS AND PHILOSOPHERS

By VINCENT ENGELS

ONE EFFECT of the machine which Mr. Stuart Chase may not yet have pointed out is the sometimes violent disturbance it sets up in the imagination of writers whose learning includes nothing about mechanics. And these, as things happen, nine times out of ten will also be writers of a sentimental rather than a critical inclination, of a headlong rather than a disciplined judgment, of a poetic rather than a factual eye. The subject of the machine is full of treachery for them: the character of their amazement in the face of a mechanical marvel being enough to indicate that it could not exist without complete ignorance of what makes the wheels go round. The reference here is not to men who write about the economic consequences of machinery, but to men unconcerned with mechanics and economics who are yet not indifferent to the presence of the machine, and whose response to it is an emotional eruption. Of this we have had recently an illustrious example in Mr. Sherwood Anderson. Once he disliked machines; he was anxious that the world should do without them, which is more than any reasonable person, acting out of experience and knowledge, would require. Since then, as the result of some excursions into the cotton mills, he has abandoned Erewhon for a new Schenectadian paradise. The conversion was brought about largely by a certain machine which he describes at some length in his book, "Perhaps Women," the passage setting what is surely the high-water mark of his style (and his style is one of the high-water marks of the child-cult in language).

Then he writes: "I am describing this particular machine in a room far away from it, in a quiet room, no technical description of the machine before me, the accuracy of my description mattering nothing." Mechanics does not enter here.

"An impression sought, something beautiful, something in movement beautiful.

"Something in tone beautiful, in sound beautiful.

"Why, there is power here. Here is the almost god.

"A crazy new grace—

"Steel fingers jerking—in movements, calculated, never varied...

"Great arms moving..."

And he writes: "It was a moment of pure machine worship. I was on my knees before the new god, the American god.

"Myself not hysterical, not made hysterical by the wonder of that particular machine."

The machine was a Barker-Coleman Spooler Warper. I should like to know what its inventors, or the men who built it, would say if they heard Mr. Anderson on the subject of their machine. Even more, I should like to know what the men who work beside it would say. Any imaginative man who has worked with huge complicated machinery (has Mr. Anderson, I wonder?) knows that there are moments when, exhausted by his vigil or by vain efforts at repair, he is aroused to the same hostility which a farmer feels for a piece of stubborn land, or a mason for a stone that will not fit. No more, no less. And there are, true enough, infrequent moments in the night shift, the shadows in the mill then being queer, the windows looking out on blackness, when the machine will seem like some fantastic living thing. But the illusion passes instantly; there is no obsession, as Mr. Anderson would have it; and for the rest of the time, the workman is no more aware of the machine than he is of the concrete floor on which he stands, and less than of the cigarette which he is smoking against the rules. It is not the perfection, but the imperfection, of mechanization which results

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in depressing psychological effects. The simplest machines are the most monotonous and laborious to tend. If machines are ever to subjugate the souls of men, as Mr. Anderson thinks, the time must now be upon us, for with the rapid passing of semi-automatic machinery the opportunity for such a conquest is becoming a smaller one each day. Any mechanic would tell the philosopher that the more automatic a machine becomes, the less it demands in the way of physical and nervous endurance, and the more in the way of intelligence, and also the more scope it gives for the development of intelligence.

If Mr. Anderson were more familiar with a Barker-Coleman Spooler Warper, ecstasy would almost certainly change to boredom. If he were more familiar with the whole tribe of machines, he would cease to worry about them; at least would cease to be frightened at their simulation of life. It is the novelty which astonishes. The first chisel in the hands of the first artist probably aroused quite as much veneration as Televox today. And today a savage would feel much as Mr. Anderson does about machines, and would class them with the strange and terrifying objects of his native village: stones in the shape of turtles, parrots of unusual plumage, trees crossed by the wind, a shell from the sea. In the stone, in the bird, he would identify elemental forces, and regarding them be shaken in the grip of an elemental ecstasy and fear. Like Mr. Anderson in a cotton mill. In the case of the philosopher, it is certainly significant that the forces emanated from so unusual a machine as the Barker-Coleman Spooler Warper. He ought to look inside a Ford car, and see there the metal-encased Thing, armored, but naked in its armor; and feel all the barriers between man and matter, between present and past and future, breaking down at the correspondence of its muffled throbbing to the pulse beat of a man. He ought to look inside a radio and see tubes glowing as if with sunlight from an age remoter than the history of man can deal with, a fluttering sunlight captured forever in the heart of a petrified rose. But this he could not do, because as a newspaper man he knows too much about Mr. Ford and the Radio Corporation of America to respect them, and so as a poet he could not feel the divine swoon before their products.

In Mr. Anderson's late prostration there is, of course, something reminiscent of a character whom Eugene O'Neill called Reuben Light, and exhibited in his play "Dynamo." For this boy, half-crazed with family disloyalty and tyranny, electricity came to mean the source of all life, power, justice, beauty. He worshiped the dynamo, offered it a vow of celibacy, and ended by shooting his human sweetheart and electrocuting himself. The purpose of the play was to "dig at the roots of the sickness of the age," as Mr. O'Neill sees it, this sickness resulting from a sort of vacuum in heaven, the loss of an old god, and the tardy appearance of a new one. Being an O'Neill play, it was written with as much skill and power as anyone brings to the stage nowadays. Yet it was deplorably unsuccessful; there being, perhaps, too many sceptical playwrights in the audience. Even the playwright's friendliest critics failed to believe in Reuben Light, and in his tragedy. The general feeling among the friendly seemed to be a kind of awe, the master having so unexpectedly tripped up here; among the unfriendly there was a lot of disrespectful amusement. The point to be made is that if Americans were half so machine-conscious as Mr. Anderson thinks, at least a few would have been found who could have believed in Reuben Light, and discovered in the play an interpretation of their own confusion, and their own problems. The trouble with "Dynamo," of course, was that the problems there sketched do not exist in reality; and with Mr. Anderson's book likewise that its problems are so largely of his personal invention. If you believe they are more real and more general than that, you should go with an open mind into a modern factory, not to watch the machines, nor from some vantage point to watch the men attending them, but to work. You will find plenty of problems, but they will not be Mr. Anderson's; you will learn a great deal, and you will forget the emotional peril of machinery.

One word more. In the attitude of our poet-philosophers toward the machine there is an excess of sentimentality where appreciation and understanding alone are called for. Thirty years ago, when we were a good deal less familiar with the possibilities of machinery than we are now, hysteria might have been accepted more easily as prophetic literature. Thirty years ago did see Henry Adams, considerably agitated by the new machinery and bewildered at the task of fitting it into his theory of history, confronting the dynamo with all the respect and admiration which an electrician would advise, but with in addition the kind of awe peculiar to philosophers, which an electrician finds amusing. To his friend Langley "the dynamo itself was but an ingenious channel for conveying somewhere the heat latent in a few tons of poor coal hidden in a dirty engine-house," but "to Adams the dynamo became a symbol of infinity." Yet he was careful to note the vast difference between the kind of energy represented by the dynamo, and the energy of which the Virgin has been the historic source, "the highest energy ever known to man." Here were two kingdoms of force which could not well be confused, and having no common boundary except in the attraction each might exert on the mind of the historian.

COMMUNICATIONS

CATHOLICS AND THE CONSTITUTION

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Far from boasting of seven generations of American ancestry, like Father Ross, I cannot boast of one; and though I could probably number twice, perhaps three times, seven generations of Catholic ancestry, yet during the last few hundred years my ancestry, on both sides of the family, has been Protestant. From my earliest childhood I was taught that "the Pope hath no jurisdiction in this realm" (of England), but that to me, as well as to my parents and teachers, meant primarily that the Pope had no authority to depose our sovereign, or to overrule our Parliament. There was, of course a secondary meaning, that the Pope could not be allowed ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Christians who happened to be British subjects. When I reached years of discretion, and became a Catholic, I of course rejected the secondary meaning, but it has never occurred to me to reject the former, and I think I may claim the support of our own great American prelate, Cardinal Gibbons, that is, if I read aright his oft-quoted article in the *North American Review,* March, 1909.

I may misjudge the situation among Protestants who ask the questions about double allegiance, which Father Ross has so often had to answer, but I believe their main difficulty is that they misunderstand the scope of allegiance to the Pope, and think that the Pope claims the right to dictate to the Catholic voter whether he should vote for, let us say, a high tariff policy, or a low tariff policy, or that should the Pope declare a supposed marriage to have never been, according to the evidence, contracted, therefore the parties are absolved by the Pope from such statutory or civil law obligations as are recognized by the American federal and state courts.

That the denial of papal jurisdiction means that citizens are exempt from the moral law, I am sure never enters the minds of these misinformed Protestant brethren. Father Ross has, of

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course, from his earliest childhood, been accustomed to regard the Pope as the divinely appointed last resort in the interpretation of the moral law, and rightly so. But Father Ross will surely allow the necessary distinction between the moral law and the statutory law. There have been extreme advocates to name the same doctrine, state absolutism, who have confused the two, but the distinction is one of philosophy, not of revealed religion.

That level-headed Protestants do make the distinction is clear from the discussion, which gave rise to Father Ross's article. Dr. Macintosh's whole argument was based on this distinction. Nor do I know of any evidence that even the five judges who signed the majority decision of the Supreme Court fail to make the distinction. Their decision had nothing to do with the moral law. That there should be any conflict between statutory and moral law is to be deplored. Four of the judges (out of nine) seem to think there is no conflict. The five are not infallible, but their decision has raised a grave doubt, which would be well removed by the proper means.

I am sorry that Father Ross gave his article the title he did. The title would seem to imply that Catholics interpret their allegiance to the United States in a way different to that in which well-informed and well-intentioned Protestants, Jews and latitudinarians interpret theirs. And this misunderstanding cannot, it seems to me, fail to perpetuate the conviction that "somehow or other" Catholics make less of their civil allegiance than becomes true Americans.

The five majority judges may have been mistaken in their decision. Long before the decision was rendered the thought had come to me: what exactly is the reservation which the doctor wishes to make? A pledge of allegiance to the civil power in no way includes a pledge to commit sin. Not even a vow of obedience can include that, not the monk's vow to obey his abbot, nor the Jesuit's vow to obey the Pope. "Such obedience must not be against God . . . for such obedience would be illicit" (Saint Thomas, "Summa Theologia," II-II, Q. civ, a. 5, ad 3; see also Q. clxxxvi, passim, and I-II, Q. xciii, a. 3). The majority judges can hardly have thought that a learned professor did not know that a pledge of allegiance involved no promise to commit sin, even at the behest of the civil power.

If the majority judges thought that Dr. Macintosh denied the authority of the constituted government to render judgment as to whether in this or that case war is just, then it would seem that they were right in refusing him his citizenship. In doing so, they in no way proclaimed any infallibility on the part of the constituted officers of government. Dr. Macintosh may be mistaken in thinking a war unjust, or the government in thinking it just, but unless someone (not infallible) is to decide on what action the country is to take, no country can ever defend itself against any aggression or oppression, however serious. The decision of the government might constitute it a statutory offense for any citizen to refuse to support the military operations. The offense would be a moral offense only if the offender refused support without its being quite clear to him that the decision was erroneous, or in bad faith. Francisco di Vittoria in "De Jure Belli" (Dubium 2 and 3) says that even in case of doubt, the citizen must obey; it is when and only when it is clear to him that the war is unjust, that he must refuse obedience. (Francisco di Vittoria's "De Indis and de Jure Belli" is published both in the original [two versions] and in translation by Carnegie Peace Foundation. The matter is fully treated by him.) The minority judges seem to have thought that there was no statutory obligation if the citizen were convinced that the decision of the government was erroneous or in bad faith, that is, no statutory obligation under the laws of the United States. But even if there were, I cannot see that I am entrusting my conscience to Congress when I consent to their appointment as arbiters of the justice, any more than I am entrusting my conscience to the county court when I consent to its appointment as arbiter of whether I may appropriate to my own use a piece of property.

I think Father Ross's Cabinet officer might resign. The decision does not seem to me necessarily to contravene di Vittoria's doctrine. Please point out to me my fallacy.

W. Esdaile Byles.

Bourbonnais, Ill.

TO the Editor: I have read the article by Father J. Elliot Ross on "Catholics and the Constitution" with a great deal of interest and fellow feeling, for I have had many of the experiences which he describes. With his general contentions, I am in full agreement, but I do not think that Catholics are in any worse position than any other rational citizen of the country. The doctrine of the supremacy of the individual's conscience is not a distinctively Catholic doctrine, but is derived, unless I am terribly mistaken, from the natural law. It is true that the declarations of Popes and the unvarying teachings of Catholic moralists insist upon the importance of the individual following the dictates of his conscience, but these facts do not make this a Catholic doctrine as such. It is Catholic only in the sense that Catholic doctrines may be said to embrace all truth of a moral character, but there are plenty of moral truths derived from the natural law which many other people besides Catholics admit. Hence, why are Catholics in any worse position than any other citizens of the country who are guided by rational principles? The question with which Father Ross concludes his article should rather read: "Is it consistent with rational (not Catholic) principles for a citizen (not Catholic) to take an oath that he will support the United States by arms in every war whatever Congress may declare irrespective of his own conscientious convictions as to the justness of the war?" The answer to this question must be negative.

The decision of the Supreme Court in question is in accordance with the increasing Caesarism of the age. We no longer believe in the old fallacy that the king can do no wrong, but there are millions of Americans today who apparently act upon the principle that the state can do no wrong. This is a more dangerous doctrine than the first. When the king had given too much objective evidence of the fallacy of the principle that he could do no wrong, outraged subjects could at least cut off his head. It is not so easy to cut off the heads of millions of unthinking people. Before such strenuous measures become necessary, it would be well to oppose such erroneous doctrines in their beginnings. It is easier to crush an acorn than cut down an oak.

Rev. J. W. R. Maguire, C.S.V.

SOMETHING TOUCHING THE LORD HAMLET

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editor: Richard Dana Skinner's criticism of the Geddes production of Hamlet as published in The Commonweal of November 18 reveals, I believe, a common misconception of the character of Hamlet, and one hardly in harmony with Shakespeare's own intention as he created. Putting the matter briefly and plainly, Mr. Skinner is evidently of the opinion that Hamlet's "ineffective wandering around" in the graveyard scene is to be explained by his having been "arrested by the king, banished, set upon by pirates, and only

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just returned to his own land." (Mr. Skinner even tells us this *fully* explains it.)

This analysis of the dramatic action hardly agrees with the generally accepted notion of Elizabethan tragedy applying to Shakespeare's play in the strictest manner—a play featuring a person of great estate who meets with an unfortunate end because of his own weaknesses or mistakes. Hamlet was not a victim of circumstances; and Shakespeare took pains to reveal his shortcomings as well as his nobility and fineness of nature.

Mr. Skinner incautiously uses two expressions which but weaken his own criticism when he refers to Hamlet's being "keyed up" and "wandering around." These expressions are true to Hamlet because they reveal (the first) his magnificently passionate nature and (the second) his indecision.

How can Mr. Skinner assert, further, that Hamlet, "according to the explicit instructions of his father's ghost," treats his mother with "respect and tenderness" when Shakespeare had him speak to his mother in such lines as the following:

> "Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue. . . .
>
> "You are the queen . . .
> And—would it were not so!—my mother. . . .
>
> "Assume a virtue, if you have it not."—III, iv.

In regard to the killing of that old fool, Polonius, your critic writes, "he [Hamlet] believes it to be the king and acts instantly." No. Wounded in his pride, angered, and aroused with a temporary moral courage, he acts impulsively.

Shakespeare's Hamlet was magnificent, noble, a man of fine feeling; and Shakespeare, in poetic justice, gave him the stage for the display of these manly qualities. But Hamlet was also a dreamer, and not a soldier; a celibate, and not a lover; a scholar, and not a prince. And by the same laws of poetic composition Shakespeare has him soliloquize, not bear arms; preach, not marry; and die without heirs that a leader of fighting men might become heir to the throne of Denmark.

J. Leo Sullivan.

THE CASKET LETTERS

Ottawa, Ont.

TO the Editor: In the course of a letter dealing with the Dreyfus case, published in your issue of November 25, Mr. Hilaire Belloc refers, incidentally, to the matter of the "Casket Letters, still ascribed to Mary Queen of Scots," as an unsolved historical problem. I gather that Mr. Belloc has not as yet read the latest work on the subject, "The Persecution of Mary Stuart," by Sir Edward Parry, a retired English judge (Cassell and Company), because in the light of the author's reasoning and the evidence upon which it is based, it is difficult to see how anyone can still maintain that the letters were otherwise than clumsy forgeries. That, at least, is the conclusion of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who in the *Illustrated London News* of August 8, 1931, states very emphatically that the controversy over the Casket Letters, after having raged so fiercely for so long, has been finally disposed of in favor of the queen. It may be worth while to add that Sir Edward Parry describes himself as "a stout Protestant" and his espousal of Mary's cause cannot, therefore, be ascribed to religious bias. His interest in the case appears to be purely professional, as is indicated by his subtitle, "A Study of Criminology."

W. L. Scott.

USURY AS A NEW ISSUE

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: That almost all saving is made by investing in real estate or in industry, has a bearing on the discussion of the rate of interest. There is an enormous but definite value of industry which can produce and sell goods to this country under present standards of living. When this industry was capitalized and people still wanted to invest, more industry was capitalized, with consequent overproduction.

Nowadays more goods are produced than are consumed by people actually in business (and their dependants); the rest of the goods produced are consumed on savings, on loans or on charity. The economic system must be changed, somehow, to force those now in production to consume the equivalent of what they produce so that there will be room in industry for the jobless. As the fault of not consuming what they produce lies mainly with the rich, the capitalists (who add to their wealth each year), shorter working hours for the wage class would not be a complete cure. The above considerations point toward a lowered rate of interest on money. If the supply of money for investment is greater than the value of industry which society demands, then the price paid for money must go down.

As the foregoing arguments are not entirely new, I hope they will be understood in their sketchy presentment.

A clear-minded economist should analyze the entire situation quantitatively. Quantitatively because only by considering the proportionate amounts of money, credit and securities, and the distribution and changes of those amounts during recent years, can be found the proportionate effects of the rate of interest, of the credit system, of labor-saving machinery, of hoarding, the tariff, reparations, etc. In planning remedies, moreover, one must consider what people will do and will not do.

Sean Scanlon.

A CRISIS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: It is good news that on Sunday, December 12, you are to preside as chairman of the joint meeting of Jews, Catholics and Protestants to be held at White Plains, to advance the cause of international peace.

Believe me, we are standing at a turning point in the history of the world. We must either go forward along the path of international understanding and international coöperation to rebuild this broken and distressed world on the firm foundation of peace and prosperity, whose cornerstone, in turn, shall be justice and fair-dealing, or we must face a chaos of economic disaster, of armed and destructive nationalistic competition, as well as of social and political disorder. Governments everywhere, and particularly our own government, lag far behind public opinion in respect to this vital matter. It is alike the duty and the opportunity of public opinion to require governments to take the path of progress, to leave off using outworn and meaningless formulas, and to look the facts in the face.

The coming Disarmament Conference will put us all to the test. If we realize that security can only come through disarmament, all will be well. If, on the other hand, we allow the opinion to gain ground that there must be armaments in order to provide security, then we shall not have learned the awful lesson which the years of 1914 to 1918 have to teach, and must prepare ourselves for the worst. What will the American people do about it?

Nicholas Murray Butler.

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THE PLAY

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

The Passing Present

HOPE WILLIAMS and a generous dose of atmosphere are the chief merits of "The Passing Present," a new play by Gretchen Damrosch which seeks to catch the pathos of that exact moment at which an old family and its traditions break up.

You might wander into almost any one of those old brown stone houses in what were once aristocratic centers of New York and find parts of this story repeated. You would probably find a family like the French family, bred to ease, quiet and a certain ineffectiveness, with a father whose memories of early youth on the Continent were superior to his consciousness of immediate responsibilities, a wife who, for all her charm, still preferred to be adored by men, young and old, daughters with no particular objective, and a neurotic and overambitious son spurred to rash efforts to make money by the sight of his father's middle-aged failure. You might find, too, if you were lucky, one of those old maiden aunts, like Aunt Hallie French, living with the family in quiet unobtrusiveness, and you would of course find the various in-laws and friends moving in and out of the framework of the dignified old home as if nothing could ever bring to an end the cycle of birth and death and the everlasting present.

Then—one day—you might find all this crashing to dusty powder. You might find the son, led on by his ambitions and by the spoiling he has received from his mother, lending his proud name to a dishonest enterprise and the father compelled to sell the home in order to cover up a family disgrace. You might find him, with stern bravado, giving a farewell party to all his friends after the house had been stripped of its furniture, and you might find the family leaving, one by one, with eyes straight ahead, some for trains to California, others for the steamer to Europe, and still others with plans indefinite, too deeply hurt to know what to do. In finding this, you would be discovering all that is sensitive and understanding and out of the ordinary run of plays in Miss Damrosch's work.

What you might not find would be the curiously uneasy and indefinite viewpoint of the daughter who is obviously the central character of the story, of Page French, that is, who is in love with her cousin's husband, and seems, at the close of the play, to have made up her mind to marry him, after a convenient divorce. In fact, there is a great deal in the last act which you might not find—situations that become unreal as the authoress seems to feel the hurried need of drawing loose strings together. The theme of the play, which is the closing of a family tradition, gives way to a needless effort to hint at the future.

Instead of relying on the "passing present" as having quite enough of mildly tragic implication in its very indefiniteness, and in the passing from stability to uncertainty, Miss Damrosch has tried, in a few rushed moments, to bring an ending to things that never end. It is this effort which makes Page French's decision inexplicable and otherwise alters the whole feeling of the play. It almost obliterates that superb off-stage climax of the second act, when we know that the father is learning of his son's disgrace, and when the muffled but agonized voices of the family are heard upstairs by those waiting below.

Cyril Scott etches a fine and understandable portrait of the father, and Helen Strickland as Aunt Hallie dominates the play more perhaps than the playwright intended, but to its distinct advantage. It is Hope Williams, however—and as usual—who pervades the play with that quiet assurance which supplants all need of acting. I cannot agree that Miss Williams lacks emotional force. She may lack the technique to express it in every type of character, but in all the plays selected for her so far, she conveys a hundred shades of emotion through the highest art of understatement. Her very silences are eloquent. Her art may be limited, but within its own limits it has authority and carries complete conviction. Should one ask for more?

This Matter of Art and Ethics

THE QUESTION is asked more insistently today than ever before, "how can one possibly bring moral or ethical considerations into a criticism of the art of the theatre?" One may, it appears, attack a bit of acting, the tempo of a play's direction, the clumsiness with which an author develops his theme, and the inadequacy of scenic design or of stage lighting. But one may not, on pain of mortal offense against dramatic criticism, discuss the ethical values of a theme. One may not find a wittily wrought comedy offensive simply because its theme is the condoning of adultery. One may not object to a powerfully written tragedy simply because its theme is a justification for despair or because it has no song of inspiration rising from the ashes it leaves. Above all, one may not object to any excess of realism in speech or action which an author may use. Objection, in such cases, is equivalent to limiting his "artistic" palette, to denying him the use of certain material in a world where full freedom is the right of the artist and the artist alone.

The whole ridiculous truth of the matter lies, of course, in the fact that the modern world refuses to recognize the importance of any ethical standards at all. It readily accepts standards in design and color, even when it recognizes that there may be several conflicting sets of standards. You might find acute disagreement among critics as to certain uses of color and lighting by Norman Bel Geddes, but the critic who preferred a blue light to a green one would not condemn his neighboring critic for preferring a purple light to either a green or a blue one. Each would recognize the other's right to a set of color standards as applied to a certain desired effect. In the same way, you might find disagreement but not mutual disapproval, between two critics discussing the relative merits of Katharine Cornell and Lynn Fontanne. They might discuss the technical artistry of these two actresses from diametrically opposite viewpoints, but neither would think the other stuffy or prejudiced for applying his own set of standards. There are plenty of critics who are granted the full right to think that Eugene O'Neill's prose is rich in poetry, even by other groups who feel that however poetic his instincts may be, his prose is stodgy and cumbersome. Thus standards for judging style are readily permitted. But the moment you suggest applying a standard of ethics to the theme of a play, the hue and cry is raised. The citadel of art is being violated. The artist is being judged by something which is extraneous to his art.

This is quite like saying that a great chef must never be judged by the quality of the meat he so skilfully prepares. Because Gaston cooks a steak to a beautiful turn and serves it with a sauce fit for kings, it is ungrateful and inexcusable to point out the sad fact that the steak is tainted. Presumably one should eat it with a smile and as a consequence suffer all the pangs of poisoning rather than violate the citadel of Gaston's culinary art!

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In other words, it is worth pointing out that art, if it means anything at all, has that meaning only in relation to life. Art, in any form, is the effort to abstract something great or small from the multiplicity of life, including the dreams which are also a part of life, and to give that abstraction a form which reveals its truth, as seen or felt by the artist. The truth which an artist thinks he feels may be a truth about evil as well as about good. But the point is that it has a definite relation to life. It cannot utterly transcend human experience, and thereby transcend life, for the simple reason that it passes through a human brain and reflects a human judgment or emotion. But life and ethical judgments are inseparable. No matter how many codes of ethics there may be, there is not a human action that is not conditioned in some measure by one of them. To the militant atheist, it is an ethical matter to flout the worship of God. To the Mormon, it was an ethical matter to have four wives. Ironically enough, to a certain group of moderns, it is actually an ethical matter to object to applying ethics to art! And so it goes.

One's standards may be entirely negative, but they remain standards none the less. Even the negation of all traditional moral standards is nothing more nor less than the substitution of negative standards for positive ones.

The real objection of the moderns, of course, is the farthest thing from what they imagine it to be. In protesting against the application of ethics to art, all they are really doing is objecting to the application of ethics with which they themselves disagree. They simply do not like the discipline of traditional ethics, and so apply instead their own ethics of complete freedom. Because they are not certain of any validities, they object to anything approaching certainty in anyone else. But so far as any actual elimination of ethics from art is concerned, they are confessing, by the very vigor of their protest, to an almost religious fanaticism for their own ethics of freedom and irresponsibility.

This fact, however, does not fully cover the matter at issue. Even if we admit the impossibility of divorcing ethics of some kind from artistic judgments, there still remains the question of whether we can object to a given play, for example, and object to it as a work of art, if it has ethical implications with which we disagree. The moderns contend, in brief, that we may, if we insist, object to the ethics of a play's theme, but that we must not let that "blind" us to the value of its art as art. This is the pigeon-hole view of things that an era of high specialization has brought. It comes from a complete confusion of art with artifice. Art, taken as a whole, includes both the artist's effort to express what appears to him as a truth, and the manner in which he achieves that expression. The manner is the artifice. The truth, as apprehended, is the idea. It takes the two, fused together, to make up the final accomplishment of art.

Now it is precisely because the idea is quite as important as the execution of the idea that art must always subject itself willingly to an objective criticism which weighs both the idea and the artifice. Plays are written for audiences. Audiences, in fact, compose at least half of that magic thing we call the theatre. If the audience disagrees with the ethical idea of a play, then it cannot appear to that particular audience as complete art, no matter how fine its artifice. So far as the individual critic is audience "by proxy" for his readers, he is merely a coward and charlatan of the worst order if he does not mingle his ethical standards with his standards of artifice in appraising a play's worth. He is merely an imbecile if he judges the meat of a play solely by its sauce.

BOOKS

Questions of Some Importance

IF THE citizen took his duties very seriously, he might well hie to a library and spend the rest of his days making out precisely what civic and economic program he ought to favor. Yet there is none of us but can occasionally read good books on this, that and the other aspect of current affairs. "American National Government," by the late Samuel Peter Orth and Robert Eugene Cushman, seems the best short work of general reference on the federal government (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company. $3.50). The price is exceptionally reasonable for such a large volume which, though designed for use as a college text, will fit perfectly well into the average working library. It is distinguished for the stress it lays on constitutional history, for the concreteness with which it illustrates the working-out of government functions, and for a constant careful reckoning with experience. One may, to be sure, question the rightness of not a few assertions, but the work as a whole is satisfyingly factual. It is a pity that the writing is not better. Virtually all the awkwardnesses permitted by English syntax are here exemplified. But these seem to be the stock-in-trade of American scholarly authors.

"Frankenstein Incorporated" is an attempt to show that the modern corporation is a fictive corpus, endowed by the state with a legal personality that may accomplish dire things unless regulated. The author, I. Maurice Wormser, is professor of law in Fordham and a well-known writer on legal subjects. (New York: Whittlesey House. $2.50). After two good but necessarily sketchy chapters dealing with the history of corporations in the Old World and the New, Professor Wormser settles down to supply a keen study of what a corporation really is and of what distinguishes it from other business organizations. From this point one may then proceed to study the evils which have followed in the wake of corporate enterprise and to consider the remedies which have been proposed. Professor Wormser is explicit and excellent. Like a good lawyer he quotes chapter and verse to prove that the 200 corporations which are now earning 40 percent of the nation's income must not only clean house but sponsor a social philosophy worthy of the people. His is a good book which deserves attention.

Mr. Roy Dickinson, of *Printers' Ink,* has long since been interested in the question of wages. He now offers "Wages and Wealth" (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. $2.50) to "add to the conversation" which he rightly says is now universal regarding business decline and allied matters. His book is a little chaotic, but the leading idea is that wages are the underpinning of national economy and that ought not to be hammered first whenever a depression comes along. When the price level falls, some reaction on wages is, to be sure, inevitable. But it is the business of industry to make provision against such reactions. In other words: what is needed is some form of social insurance. Mr. Dickinson analyzes the Dennison Plan and other ideas for wrestling with "the bulges" in business. He writes appealingly and with a good deal of common sense.

A very important subject is dealt with intelligently in Ernest Jerome Hopkins's "Our Lawless Police" (New York: The Viking Press. $3.00). The author, a veteran journalist who also served with the Wickersham Commission, starts out by declaring that the "law" can be quite as lawless as the criminal, with somewhat more important consequences. Most of the book is then devoted to evidence regarding police injustice, corruption and brutality. Mr. Hopkins avoids sensational and

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unreliable sources of information, but his narrative is none the less appalling and provoking. Why is it that so few first-rate men in any of the municipalities affected give a little of their time to the problem? The remedies proposed in the present book are not easy to apply, but with the right kind of support from influential public opinion they would help to mitigate one of America's most ghastly social diseases.

Foreign affairs occupy a good deal of our time and attention. India is a particularly engrossing puzzle, to which Patricia Kendall devotes a lengthy book written with some scholarship—"Come with Me to India" (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50). It is an exceedingly pro-British book by a woman who is all modern humanitarian, without the slightest understanding of Indian mentality and without what seems to the present reviewer even the beginning of the equipment needed to envisage the work of Gandhi. Those of us who believe that England had done much excellent work in the Orient must none the less feel that all claims to imperial jurisdiction necessarily require the consent of the governed. Mrs. Kendall seems particularly impressed by certain dire possibilities that might follow a radical Indian movement. She says: "British interests in the Great Indian Dependency are so enormous and diverse that they underpin Great Britain's national prosperity at every point. . . . To lose these investments would paralyze the commercial organization of England and undermine her finances. Ten billion dollars in securities and investments cannot be wiped out in any country without crumpling up the value of all bonds and securities. The peoples of the world cannot afford to be indifferent to the Indian problem." That is an important point which only a fool will ignore. But after all Florence and Augsburg collapsed, and the world kept on existing.

"Gandhi at Work," edited by Charles F. Andrews (New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50) is the third volume of a work purporting to relate the story of Gandhi in his own words. Here the subject is Gandhi's effort in the Transvaal, which he had learned to know during the Boer War, to mitigate the suffering of the Indian colony. The great Indian leader set himself up as an attorney and attempted to apply the principle of Satyagraha to the situation. It is an interesting narrative, by which the modern European or American will profit to no mean extent. Perhaps the most fascinating section has to do with the Tolstoy Farm, which gives not merely a picture of an unusual educational experiment but also some insight into Gandhi's simplicity of mind at the time. He remains an extraordinary personality. Undoubtedly many of his ideas are wrong, but some of them seem quite amazingly applicable.

"How Germany Got That Way" might be a slangy title for Arthur Rosenberg's "The Birth of the German Republic," which Ian Morrow has translated almost literally (New York: The Oxford University Press. $4.75). The author, who was a member of the Reichstag's famous committee of inquiry into the causes of Germany's collapse, might justly claim to have written the best and most factual treaties on the "great catastrophe." His theme, which Americans should carefully meditate upon, is that the constitution arrived at during Bismarck's time is largely responsible for the evils which followed. Two instances may be selected from the many which Dr. Rosenberg lists. The mistakes of Wilhelm II's foreign policy were due not to manevolence on the kaiser's part, nor to the ambitions of the aristocracy. They were caused by middle-class German competition in world trade, which was not counterbalanced by a government able or willing to make the middle-class mind responsible. Primary cause: the constitution. Second, the law enabling the emperor to select military chieftains worked per-

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NEXT WEEK

WHAT OF THE HUNGER MARCH? by William Franklin Sands, is far more important and universal than its title would at first indicate. It is a penetrating study, with the great advantage of being specific, of the strategy of formulating class war, or revolution, as taught by the Bolshevists. A definite technique in this has been developed, which paradoxically approaches its aims by defeats. This is not a flag-waving or Red-baiting article, but a keen, important, objective study of a major social phenomenon of our day. The writer is a diplomat of exceptionally varied experience including personal acquaintance with some of the leaders of Bolshevism. . . . THE DANGERS OF 1932, by Don C. Seitz, considers the question, "How is the burning issue of nation-wide prohibition to get before the country for a fair test at the ballot-box? What will be the consequences if it does not? Must the North be bound helpless by the Southern sectionalists?" Mr. Seitz attacks the problem vigorously and lets in considerable light. . . . REFORMING THE REICH, by Max Jordan, is a lively and informative paper on the efforts in Germany for a stronger federalization of the forty German states which only sixty years ago were unified into a single major nation. . . . REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURAL LAW, by Joseph Michael Lalley, considers realistically the conflict between Catholic social principles, which have their foundation in natural law, with most of the social tendencies that have been thriving in the United States within the last fifty years, and which have in fact, whether or not it would be so admitted in theory, worked to the disadvantage of the natural rights of men.

fectly while His Majesty (e.g., Wilhelm I) was able to tell a star from a piece of glass, but failed abysmally under reverse conditions. Wilhelm II clung to Von Moltke Junior, to Germany's military undoing. Some of the chapters—notably those on Ludendorff on the way to and at the zenith of his power—are standard. The reader must bear in mind, of course, that many Germans would not agree with all the verdicts expressed in this book. Our author has his own ideas on not a few points. But the book as a whole is excellent and must be added to every serious library. There are some curious minor errors in the translation.

Four other good books must unfortunately be dealt with briefly. "The Labor Movement in Post-War France," by David J. Saposs, is the result of two years' study of labor conditions in the France which emerged from the war (New York: Columbia University Press. $6.00). Possibly the gist of the careful volume is contained in the following sentences: "French labor leaders of all points of view maintain both literary and physical contact with foreign labor leaders and have learned from these that centralization in other countries has tended to increase the authority of the leaders and the power of the organizations. With this idea implanted in their minds they have naturally turned more and more away from traditional Syndicalism and toward those philosophies which exalt centralization and discipline, such as Socialism, Communism and Social Catholicism."

"Society at War," by Caroline E. Playne, is an extraordinarily informing book about the British state of mind during the World War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, $3.50). It is an attempt to show how the home-fires were kept burning in Britain by psychological massage, some of which was vigorous and fantastic indeed. Very skilfully we are made to see how what was originally sound and fury turned out in the end to be tragically ridiculous palaver. Regrettable is Miss Playne's inability to let the facts speak for themselves, without superabundant pathos. China is the scene of Thomas F. Millard's "The End of Exterritoriality in China" (Shanghai: The A. B. C. Press). It is the work of one who, appointed national adviser to the Chinese government, wishes to explain the meaning of recent changes in Chinese policy. The book is of some importance in the present crisis. "Illiteracy in the United States," by Sanford Winston, is a thorough statistical study of what the author describes as "the rôle of education in equipping the individual for adjustment to the complexities of modern life." His conclusion is that when the immigration factor is eliminated, the illiteracy rate for native whites of native parentage would be about 1 percent. Indians are the worst off from the publishers' point of view, with Negroes some 10 percent better.

T. C.

Slim Blue Smoke

Wings against the Moon, by Lew Sarett. New York: Henry Holt and Company. $2.00.

THE COVER and jacket of "Wings against the Moon" evince Mr. Sarett's preoccupation with the blues that are a more prominent note of the Northern landscape than any American painter or poet has before realized. He has the "noon's bright bowl of blue," "the slim blue smoke of burning pine," and "cool blue stars" that hang over the fir-clad lands that lie against "the lovely sweep of Lake Superior's blue." His verse, with its "valleys of waters that softly speak of streams," evokes the sounds and scenes he describes in striking fashion,

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and his latest volume sustains his reputation as a craftsman, while it lengthens considerably the list of poems on the voyageur and lumberjack. In particular, the tradition of the lumberjack is one that American letters cannot afford to miss.

The charm of Lew Sarett's poetry flows, I think, from his freedom from bookish tradition and his unstudied utterance. His poetic fault is an occasional cluttering up of detail to the detriment of the single impression some of his most interesting poems might otherwise make. Nor is his sense of epithet unerring.

One rises from the book with a new respect for contemporary verse. "Skinning a Bear" is a curiously haunting piece of writing. "Fox Heart" is a graphic study of the lumber camps. "The Deer Hunt," in which two hunters track a buck through the brush, furnishes a coign of comparison with the classic "Morte del Cervo" of D'Annunzio, precisely because Mr. Sarett stands outside that tradition, yet leaves his stag, standing

> ". . . among the birches—
> Beautiful! Posing—copper against the vermilion—
> That high-flung head indifferent to the snow,"

quite as vivid and real as any stag borne down by the centaur under the classic waters of the Serchio.

SPEER STRAHAN.

Neither Sawdust nor Soufflé

The Pageant of Civilization, by Arthur G. Brodeur. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. $6.00.

MR. LYTTON STRACHEY, commenting on the fact that the late Professor Samuel Gardiner could absorb facts and state them but had no point of view, grieves "that his book on the most exciting period of English history resembles nothing so much as a very large heap of sawdust." What might be called the Sawdust School of historians continues to flourish. Its members, commendably, have a passion for facts; but they have no point of view, no pattern, and accordingly erect no unified structures. In addition, they usually do not know how to write; and, as Mr. Hilaire Belloc says, "history which is not readable is not history at all."

At the other extreme are those writers of history who are only writers. Sometimes, like Mr. H. G. Wells, they are novelists fallen from grace; sometimes, like Mr. Will Durant, they are intellectual lightweights with a gift of the gab. They might be called the Soufflé School of history.

Neither sawdust nor soufflé is Professor Brodeur's "The Pageant of Civilization," a work at once satisfying, scholarly and eminently readable. Its author respects facts, though he never succumbs to their tyranny. He has mastered the apparatus of scholarship but refrains from pedantic display. Emphatically, he knows how to write; many of his paragraphs are bright with all the resources of English style; and he possesses a point of view:

"I have desired to stress, in this review of civilization, the insignificance of race, and the vast importance of geography, for the growth of human culture. It was an accident that those short, dark, long-headed peoples whom we call, collectively, the Mediterranean race were the first to produce a high civilization—an accident of geography. They found themselves, at a very early time, in an environment that forced them to create.

"It was also an accident that the so-called Aryan peoples—whom some writers insist on designating as 'Nordic'—were placed in an environment long removed from the sea, and far

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from the Mediterranean centers of culture. But this accident destined them to remain, for thousands of years, relatively backward and undeveloped. The true Nordic peoples, those Aryans who migrated very early to the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea, were to continue in a comparatively primitive condition until they established contacts with the Mediterranean nations."

That point of view, however, is not a thesis defended fanatically against all comers. Professor Brodeur does not worship his theory. But he does employ it to invest his far-flung study with unity and order.

After a brief Introduction devoted to the materials and methods of history, "The Pageant of Civilization" consists of seven lengthy chapters: "Egypt, the Land of the Double Crown"; "Babylonia, the Valley of Paradise"; "Crete, the Empire of the Sea"; "Assyria and Chaldea, the Reign of the Semites"; "Greece, the Bearer of Light"; "India, Land of the Undying Past"; and "Rome, Forge of the Modern World." Then follow a carefully selected and truly helpful bibliography, a satisfying index and four pages of maps. The book is generously illustrated.

The chapter on Rome, bringing the story of the European tradition of culture well into the Renaissance, is satisfying in form and in substance. Throughout the entire book the author avoids fantastical theories, paradoxical hypotheses, contemporary fads. He has written a book like the fabled river wherein it was said a lamb could find footing, an elephant swim and a diver fish pearls.

BROTHER LEO.

Knowing Saint Paul

The Epistles of St. Paul, with Introductions and Commentaries, Volume II, by Very Reverend Charles J. Callan, O.P. New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Incorporated. $5.00.

"IF ALL priests only knew Saint Paul thoroughly," says Father Callan in his preface, "they would find little trouble in preaching." To which I should gladly add an emphatic "Amen," if "knowing Saint Paul" includes an imitation of his spirit. For in this country we are missing thousands of opportunities to expound Catholicism that must certainly have been eagerly grasped by the valiant man who invaded the Areopagus.

But Father Callan's introductions to each of the Epistles and his commentaries thereon, will help the average priest to a better understanding of Paul's spirit, as well as to a better knowledge of this theology. And not the least admirable feature in this connection is the fact that Father Callan goes back to the Greek text when necessary to correct the familiar Douay-Challoner translation.

Sometimes the author, however, goes beyond this reviewer's conception of strict accuracy, as in discussing slavery. When priests and religious communities owned slaves in this country as late as 1865—and perhaps later in Brazil—it seems something of an exaggeration to assert that "it was only necessary that the Gospel be preached, understood and practised in order to bring about the eventual doom of human slavery," unless we say that these slave-holding priests and religious did not understand and practise the Gospel. And the query is suggested: should we ever suppress the liquor traffic, as we have suppressed the slave traffic, will some future commentator, forgetting the present attitude of Catholics, claim for the Church the credit of such suppression?

J. ELLIOT ROSS.

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Briefer Mention

A Buried Treasure, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.

IT IS doubtful if Miss Roberts could produce an undistinguished book, though we know by this time that her work has not all equal vitality and importance. A historical pageant like "The Great Meadow," an intense and complete life-story like "The Time of Man," cannot result every time an even uniquely gifted writer puts pen to paper. "A Buried Treasure" comes rather from the lesser mood which produced "Jingling in the Wind," though it is graver and not so fantastic. Its time is the present, but a present colored and set apart for us from the monotonous and familiar by the archaic speech and Old World dignity of those hinterland American folk of whom Miss Roberts is the literary discoverer. Its central incident, from which rays out in an ingeniously organic plan a whole little world of happenings, is the finding of a pot of gold by an old couple, Andrew and Philadelphia Blair. The tragi-comic predicament into which their good fortune plunges them, as they waver between the wish to publish it and the instinct to hush it up, is related and sustained with a slow, relishing humor that is nevertheless deeply kind to, deeply respectful of, their humanity. It is also skilfully carried forward in the pattern of the lives variously interlocking their own: the young descendant of the former great people of the place, who has returned to the scene and the rumor of his ancestors; the young lovers whom an unkind father has been keeping apart; the two bold robbers, who give darkness and dash to the picture, and get their just deserts in the end. It will do no more, perhaps, than embroider the margin of Miss Roberts's fame, but it is smoothly and delicately written, with minor touches, as it were, of the mastery which is so undubitably hers.

Penhally, by Caroline Gordon. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

THE FORMULA here is so familiar in contemporary fiction that it is not easy to account for the genuine sense of interest, even of discovery and excitement, that "Penhally" stimulates in the reader. The old family which attains a peak of splendor for a generation or two, and then goes downhill in a generation or two, is represented here by the Southern Llewellyns. Their estates and importance are consolidated early in the nineteenth century; the turn of their fortunes comes after the Civil War, and the final deciduousness of the family in the present day, when the sacred, fertile Penhally acres are bought up by Northern dollars for a private hunt club. The power of the book is probably due to Miss Gordon's unusual hold on the idea of hereditary quality. Far more than a generic study of social rise and decay, it is a dramatic account of one unique strain, a strain tenacious and vital, varying through a surprising individual range from generation to generation, but always strong, apart, almost contemptuously self-sufficient. It is recognizably the same quality in Nicholas, the ante-bellum maharajah who makes his own moral laws, in John, the great gentleman, whose personal stuff is finer and whose personal suffering proportionately greater, in Chance, the last real Llewellyn, whom the pressure of mean, unspacious circumstance turns—surprisingly, but with a certain dark hereditary logic—into a fratricide. Besides these portraits in deep relief, Miss Gordon presents a wealth of accessory material. The resource which she displays in varying and freshening her theme from decade to decade in her story is also remarkable.

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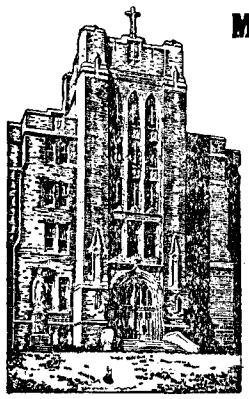

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Article Thirty-two, by John Rathbone Oliver. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

THE THESIS of the Catholicity of the Church of England, familiar to Dr. Oliver's readers, reappears here with illustrative material drawn from the American Episcopalian Church. George Stanley, the protagonist, is both chronologically and spiritually the middle figure of three clerical generations in that communion. Beginning as a simple, undiversified "muscular Christian," in the Broad Church tradition of his father, he gradually develops a consciousness of the priestly vocation, in its implications of poverty and chastity. The tragic effect of this profound change upon the whole fabric of his life-long personal associations, and chief of all upon his married life, occupies most of the book, which closes with the picture of his son taking celibate vows in an Anglican monastery. Only thus, according to Dr. Oliver, can the conflict inherent in the very mind of Anglicanism—which tries to be both Catholic and Protestant in a breath—be resolved for its priests. Dr. Oliver has one of the most valuable assets a novelist can possess: an ability quite independent of the theories which happen to absorb him, to sustain an unflagging interest in the human side of any story he elects to tell. His writing is apt to bear the impress of haste, and his technical skill is not at all remarkable. But his sense of the reality of character, and of the solid importance of moral issues, comes through each time in an engrossing book.

Pie in the Sky, by Frederick Hazlitt Brennan. New York: The Century Co. $2.50.

THE LAW of reaction, as it works out in the children of a famous radical, is the theme of this unusual—and uneven—novel. John Harron, whose only enduring human emotion has been that hatred of the privileged upon which he has built his grim, doctrinaire existence, has three sons and a daughter. Two of his sons follow his tradition. The other son and daughter revolt from their inheritance of revolution in the direction of orthodox morality and an ordered, decent, conventional existence. The story relates their adventures of discovery and their tragedies of adaptation. It is Mr. Brennan's achievement that he has not infused a special-plea air into his narrative. Though manifestly not in sympathy with the John Harron type of philosophy, he has made Harron himself a figure of rugged courage, whose very bitterness and inhumanity have an epic quality of disinterestedness. Mrs. Harron is even more sympathetically drawn. It is, on the other hand, Mr. Brennan's weakness that he cannot make the positive half of his book as compelling as his destructive analysis of radicalism. We leave the febrile, intense Claire in a convent—a solution which Mr. Brennan passes over hastily (though politely) as a *pis aller*. We leave David engaged in promoting something quite intangible called "Humanity, Inc.," from the comfortable vantage ground of his engagement to an heiress.

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